

Women in American Musical Life: Facts and Questions about Patronage¹

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Developments in feminist criticism and gender studies have recently been jostling in a healthy way a number of our scholarly assumptions about what we know about music, and how we know it. Such developments are often figured as imposing themselves, from “outside,” upon a “musicology” that is traditionally resistant to such concerns. This scenario can take positive and negative forms (though which is the positive, which the negative, will vary with the observer). In one such scenario, a new and wiser, more inclusive, more widely relevant vision of music and its interactions with the larger society is nervously or even violently rejected by a horrified scholarly community trapped in an outdated, complacent, and elitist discourse; in the extreme opposite scenario, a hostile and foreign army of

1. The present paper derives from my contribution to an interdisciplinary roundtable, “Toward a Theoretical Framework for the Study of Gender in Music,” organized by Ellen Koskoff and Ruth A. Solie (American Musicological Society, Society for Ethnomusicology, and Society for Music Theory National Meetings, Oakland, California, November 1990). My paper on that occasion also dealt with a second musicological project: the portrayal of women in opera, especially operas set outside of Europe. Some of those thoughts are developed in my articles “Constructing the Oriental ‘Other’: Saint-Saëns’ *Samson et Dalila*” in *Cambridge Opera Journal* 3 (1991): 261-302, and “Reflections on Orientalism in Opera and Musical Theater” in *Opera Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1993): 48-64. I am indebted for suggestions of various sorts to Cyrilla Barr, Robert Fink, Ellen Koskoff, Ruth A. Solie, Judith Tick, Gretchen Wheelock, and Eastman School musicology students Antonius Bittmann, Michael Goldstein, Michaela Harkins, Robert Haskins, Su Yin Mak, Carol Moen, Marjorie Roth, and Elizabeth Wells.

ideologically driven and tendentious scholars attacks the last innocent and nearly defenseless outposts of scholarly (and universally valid) common sense. In both these scenarios, attention has tended to focus, not surprisingly, on the pathbreaking and sometimes overtly iconoclastic efforts of Susan McClary, Lawrence Kramer, Robert Fink, and others to “read” musical works for the gender codes and images of sexuality inscribed within and reinforced by them.²

Without wishing to deny the significance of these battles, I would rather stress—in part because it is much less often noted—that many of us in historical musicology regard the insights of feminism and gender studies as far from unwelcome intruders; rather, we reach out to welcome them, seeing that they link up in promising ways with our long-standing curiosity about the social aspects of this thing we call “music,” open new interpretive vistas, and bring to our attention phenomena that we had previously not noticed or had somehow taken for granted.³

Particularly fruitful for feminist analysis are projects that focus on the structures of musical life and on women’s roles within (and in tension with) those structures. Such projects tend to have their own special fascinations: they deal with concrete phenomena, something that is very appealing for those of us who still like a degree of “hard” verifiability in our scholarly

2. The recent article by Philip Bohlman, “Musicology as a Political Act” in *Journal of Musicology* 11 (1993): 411-36, may be taken to represent the first-named position (musicology as seized by “moral panic”) in what has become, to my mind, an overly polarized debate; the much-debated article by Pieter C. van den Toorn that he cites at some length there (“Politics, Feminism, and Contemporary Music Theory,” *Journal of Musicology* 9 [1991]: 275-99) may be taken to represent the second-named position. Both of these articles are formulated, in substantial part, as responses to various writings of McClary. The polemical subtext of the present paper is that much significant feminist work is waiting to be done on certain topics that have not received much attention amidst all the (exciting and much-needed but also sometimes distracting) crossfire of theoretical positions and counter-critiques.

work, yet they need not be carried out in a drily positivistic spirit. Quite the contrary, the data that one amasses usually admit of a gratifyingly wide range of interpretive possibilities.

One such social-historical topic that has long needed study is music patronage in the United States, an aspect of musical life in which American women have outnumbered men many times over. (I am speaking here primarily of patronage of what, for lack of a better term, is known as "Western art music," though certain of the institutions set up for such purposes, notably the conservatories and music schools, have also contributed in important ways to the jazz scene, film music, and other strands of what might broadly be termed "popular" culture.) In general, but especially as concerns the period since around 1800, patronage has been relatively neglected by scholars. Musicology, blinded by the Great Man ideology, has until recently tended to ignore or downplay any aspect of music history that lies in the organizational and financial realm (and hence is perhaps thought to be sullied by material considerations) rather than in the more strictly compositional realm of style and genre (viewed presumably as aesthetic/intellectual/transcendent). Women's history, for its part, has given relatively little attention to patronage and other forms of volunteer work associated with women's exclusion from the world of "real"

3. Paula Higgins, in an article that, to my mind, is itself sometimes weakened (as in its title) by the sort of polarizing rhetoric noted above, nonetheless rightly stresses that much good feminist work has *already* been carried out over the past decade ("Women in Music, Feminist Criticism, and Guerrilla Musicology: Reflections on Recent Polemics," *19th-Century Music* 17 [1993]: 174-92). I would broaden her point and note that this is true of other socially conscious work beyond the explicitly feminist. Bohlman ("Musicology as a Political Act," 431) deplors the lack of attention to dance—a crucial manifestation of "the body" in music—but does not so much as mention that prominent musicologists *have* done significant and detailed work on such subjects as Renaissance dance types, dance topics in Mozart, or French and Russian ballet; see, for example, the writings of Wye Jamison Allanbrook, Bruce Alan Brown, the late Howard Mayer Brown, Daniel Heartz, Leonard Ratner, Marian E. Smith, and R. John Wiley.

salaried or hourly jobs; it has certainly, until quite recently, avoided serious discussion of patronage in the arts (as opposed to the founding of health clinics and the like, which, in a different way, may tend to be seen as more “real”—more crucial—than piano recitals and opera).⁴

I myself first began dealing with the seemingly straightforward topic of female patronage in 1973, when I was invited to examine and catalogue the musical holdings of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. Returning to the topic in the late 1980s, I quickly realized how problematic this little essay in local history had become.

To begin with, I discovered that I lacked a context for Isabella Stewart Gardner’s musical activities. It turns out that historians of American music, as the writings of Richard Crawford have helped me realize, have not tended to be any more eager than other musicologists to talk about patronage and other monetary matters.⁵ Fortunately, as I gradually learned, I was not alone: a number of other scholars were and are hunting down and fitting together various pieces of this puzzle. And a large puzzle it is, in that, once one starts to look for patrons, and especially women patrons, one finds them everywhere, from the *grandes dames* of New York, such as Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (also a major patron of visual art: her collection is now the core of the Whitney Museum), to the often nameless women of comfortable but more modest means who established musical clubs and sponsoring organiza-

4. Several recent studies of women’s clubs, women’s benevolent associations, and the like—by Karen J. Blair, Lori D. Ginzberg, and Anne Firor Scott—have helped pave the way, and a much-needed study of women’s multipronged patronage of the visual arts appeared two years ago: Kathleen D. McCarthy, *Women’s Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830-1930* (Chicago, 1991).

5. Richard Crawford, “Studying American Music,” *Institute for Studies of American Music Newsletter* 14, no. 2 (1985), 1-2 and 10-13; he expands these thoughts in his book *The American Musical Landscape* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), 41-107 and 250-303.

tions all across the country. The details that a number of us have dug up will soon be available in the form of a forthcoming book that I have coedited with Cyrilla Barr.⁶ But the questions we found ourselves puzzling over (and not always being able to answer fully) have, I think, wider ramifications, and so I would like to ponder some of them here, occasionally drawing on specific examples from my own work and that of other contributors to the book, in order to illustrate a particular point.

I would like to start with questions of a more strictly factual nature (though of course even these questions, in the way they are framed, reflect certain ideological presuppositions: I do not intend to suggest that a strict division between fact and value or interpretation is possible or, indeed, even desirable). Purged of their specific references, these questions would, I think, prove relevant to the history of musical life and the role of women within that life in other urban centers as well, whatever the time period or geographical location.

The questions start broadly but quickly turn to gender issues.

6. Ralph P. Locke and Cyrilla Barr, eds., *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists since 1860* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, forthcoming). The list of contributors includes, besides those mentioned in notes below, Jeanice Brooks (on Mildred Bliss and Nadia Boulanger), Joseph Horowitz (on the women of the Seidl Society), Geoffrey E. McGillen (on Maria Dehon and Olga Samaroff), Emanuel Rubin (on Jeannette Thurber), and Ruth A. Solie (on Sophie Drinker). The book addresses directly many of the questions posed here, but even so it cannot pretend to be a definitive treatment of a phenomenon that surely will continue to invite study and interpretation. Certain issues raised in the present article are further explored in my article, "Paradoxes of the Woman Music Patron in America," forthcoming in *Musical Quarterly*. Another related article, focusing less on gender than on social class and on the aesthetic issues involved in finding a place for "art music" in American society, is "Music Lovers, Patrons, and the 'Sacralization' of Culture in America," *19th-Century Music* 17 (1993-94): 149-73 and 18 (1994-95): 83-84. These articles, too, derive from ideas I developed in the first and last chapters of the aforementioned book.

- What, in any given scholarly study, do we mean by “patronage”? Do we consider only people who either gave money or else contributed through volunteer work and public advocacy? (That is the definition that I will accept for the rest of this paper.) Or do we also want to deal explicitly with the individuals—women, in large part—who have nurtured a musically talented child (driven her to piano lessons, sewed his band uniform, created a supportive musical environment in the home), steadied the wobbly early stages of a composer-husband’s career, and so on?⁷

- To what extent do we habitually misrepresent a city’s or country’s musical life by relying mainly on accounts published at the time, which tend to report or advertise musical events presented in public and commercial settings and to ignore those taking place in private homes, some of which boasted substantial concert spaces? What unpublished or unusual sources of documentation can we begin to tap? The daily papers gave regular space to formal reviews of public concerts, but it is only through letters, society newspapers, diaries and checkbook ledgers (if they survive), and the occasional published memoir, for example, that we realize that major performers—often visiting soloists, such as Paderewski or Nellie Melba—performed with some regularity in the Boston homes of Isabella Stewart Gardner, Sara and J. Montgomery Sears (she a visual artist, he perhaps the wealthiest man in the city), and the composers Clara Kathleen Rogers and Amy Beach.⁸ And, just as interesting, certain homes featured nothing so distinctive. In 1892, a friend of Gardner’s wrote to her that she was missing little by wintering in Venice, just the usual “band-concerts and things on...[her friends’] lawns in the moonlight.”

7. See Linda Whitesitt’s call for “a broader definition of patronage,” in her article “Women’s Support and Encouragement of Music and Musicians,” in Karin Pendle, ed., *Women and Music: A History* (Bloomington, 1991), 302. The problem of terminology—“patron,” “matron,” “advocate,” “volunteer”—is addressed at greater length in Locke, “Paradoxes of the Woman Music Patron.”

And she herself, in later years, hired various New England Conservatory students to play at her house every day (whether any guests were around or not), functioning as what we might call a kind of “classical Muzak.”⁹

- To what extent were these and other musical activities—including direct sponsorship of individual musicians and patronage of larger concert-giving bodies—the domain of high-society women? Did symphony orchestras list men as board members but rely in more substantive ways on their wives, the members of the *less*-trumpeted “women’s auxiliaries”? (Several cases of “substitution” have recently come to my attention: Carl Stoeckel, for example, was and is frequently given public credit for founding the Norfolk Festival in Northern Connecticut, which commissioned Sibelius’s *The Oceanides*, and for making substantial contributions to music at Yale University; Pamela J. Perry has discovered, though, that the money, and much of the impulse, came from Carl’s wife Ellen Battell Stoeckel.)¹⁰

- What patterns of patronage emerge? For example, how directly did women guide the choice of repertoire, and how much did they adhere to a genteel preference for established European “classics”?¹¹ Did they work to make concerts available to the less privileged classes? How interested were they in aiding the careers of young *female* musicians? (Blanche Walton,

8. Locke, “Living with Music: Isabella Stewart Gardner,” in Locke and Barr, eds., *Cultivating Music*. Gardner’s checkbook ledgers told me of certain “house concerts” not otherwise documented, and told me how much the performers were paid. Clara Kathleen Rogers’s published memoirs mention private musicales at her own home and elsewhere, and the brief memoirs of Boston pianist Heinrich Gebhard indelibly describe his playing Debussy for the poet Amy Lowell and her pensive guests.

9. Ibid. The remark on band concerts is in a letter from Thomas Russell Sullivan to Gardner, 21 July 1892 (Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston).

10. Pamela J. Perry, “Premieres by Sibelius and Others in the Connecticut Hills: Carl and Ellen Battell Stoeckel’s Norfolk Music Festivals,” in Locke and Barr, eds., *Cultivating Music*.

for example, gave a substantial boost to the composition student Ruth Crawford, taking her into her house for more than a year.)¹² A far more common pattern was for a wealthy female patron, often somewhat advanced in years, to support one or several much younger *males*. Richly documented are such patronage “couplings” as Isabella Stewart Gardner’s work with the highly cosmopolitan composer and violinist Charles Martin Loeffler and with the charmingly boyish pianist George Proctor; Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge’s personal activity on behalf of the career of the violinist Alexander Schneider (she sponsored him in free recitals of the Bach solo sonatas and partitas at college campuses across the country); Coolidge’s feisty partnership with the Library of Congress’s music chief Carl Engel (he helped her negotiate her gift of the Coolidge Auditorium to the Library, and they sparred passionately, in letters, about whether or not concerts in the Auditorium should emphasize American music); and Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney or Alma Morgenthau Wertheim’s devoted support of, respectively, Edgard Varèse and the young Aaron Copland, brash “modernist” composers who, one might at first have thought, would not likely be found in the elegant parlors of midtown Manhattan.¹³ What psychodynamics tended to be at work in

11. Consistent with the accounts given in such varied books as John H. Mueller’s *The American Symphony Orchestra: A Social History of Musical Taste* (Bloomington, 1951) and Joseph Horowitz’s *Understanding Toscanini: How He Became an American Culture-God and Helped Create a New Audience for Old Music* (New York, 1987).

12. On Crawford and Walton, see Matilda Gaume, “Ruth Crawford: A Promising Young Composer in New York, 1929-30,” *American Music* 5 (1987): 74-84; also Richard Jackson, “Walton, Blanche W.,” *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie (London, 1986).

13. Some of these “patterns of patronage” are explored further in Locke, “Paradoxes of the Woman Music Patron.” On Coolidge and on the patronage of Walton, Whitney, and Wertheim, see, respectively, Cyrilla Barr, “A Style of Her Own: The Patronage of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge,” and Carol J. Oja, “Women Patrons and Crusaders for Modernist Music: New York in the 1920s,” both in Locke and Barr, eds., *Cultivating Music*.

such relationships: surrogate mother/son bond? sublimated May-December romance? mutual manipulation and exploitation? mutual respect? How did the fact that certain of these composers, such as Copland, were homosexual affect their relationships with a female patron?

• To what extent did American women resemble women in Europe in their patronage practices (for example, in the kind of music that they brought into their homes: private recitals by virtuosos and the like); to what extent do such similarities signal an independent, parallel development, or do they arise from a more or less conscious emulation of Europe?¹⁴ (Many middle- and upper-class Americans were culturally Eurocentric; some of the wealthiest among them lived abroad for long periods and maintained transoceanic friendships.) Betty Freeman, the prominent patron of John Cage and other experimental composers (many from the West Coast), continues the pattern today, spending half the year in Turin, and hearing much of the latest music in trips to Paris and other European capitals.¹⁵

• How did these patterns of patronage change over time: say, between 1880 (Gardner) and 1920 (Whitney) or 1940 (Gertrude Clark Whittall) or 1970 and onward (Alice Tully, Ima Hogg, Louise M. Davies)? How did it vary from city to city, north to south, coast to coast? These questions are perhaps best deferred until more extensive research is done, but they tempt nonetheless. Certainly the changes in patronage in the second half of our century must be noted, as women enter

14. The need for research on European patronage is at least as great as for American patronage. One tantalizing case—a woman from an American family who, however, lived primarily in Paris—is Princess Edmond de Polignac, née Winaretta Singer, the sewing-machine heiress. See Jeanice Brooks, "Nadia Boulanger and the Salon of the Princesse de Polignac," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46 (1993): 415-68.

15. See the interview, "The 'Grand Composers' of the Present Day: Betty Freeman Discusses How She Chooses and Supports Them," forthcoming in Locke and Barr, eds., *Cultivating Music*.

careers in music (or other fields) themselves, rather than seeking, as their mothers or grandmothers did, an outlet for their passion through volunteer work and the like. Many arts administrators, including concert presenters, fundraisers, and orchestra managers, are women, often doing, for pay, work similar to that which previous generations of women used to do for free in the context of the women's music clubs, the "ladies auxiliaries," and so on.¹⁶

- What about the musical activism of women who focused their efforts, not on building a symphony orchestra, but on setting up musical training for the immigrants in the settlement houses or on installing a music curriculum in the public schools?¹⁷ To what extent were their efforts motivated (and perhaps also compromised) by elitist attitudes about what "music" is and how it should be taught?

- How did women's musical patronage vary beyond what we too often think of as the "mainstream" institutions (or indeed as the only ones) in American musical life? What kinds of musical patronage took place in, for example, America's various ethnic and immigrant communities? To what extent did Italian or German or Jewish neighborhoods encourage particular kinds of organizational activity among female music lovers? Similarly, how shall we talk about the substantial numbers of African American women who fostered music in their churches, and in their communities generally? Since these women did not usually come from privileged backgrounds, many of them were not patrons in the strict sense of working for music on a volunteer basis. Such certainly was the case with Harriet Gibbs Marshall (an Oberlin piano graduate and founder of the Washington Conservatory, the nation's first pro-

16. See Mary Natvig, "A 1970s 'Music Club Lady' and Her Musician Daughter," forthcoming in Locke and Barr, eds., *Cultivating Music*.

17. Hull House in Chicago, for example, had its music and theater activities: see Hilda Satt Polacheck, *I Came a Stranger: The Story of a Hull-House Girl*, ed. Dena J. Polacheck Epstein (Urbana, 1989), 80, 105, 107, 109-25.

fessional music school for African Americans) or Estelle Pinckney (an influential music teacher at one of Washington's all-Black high schools).¹⁸ To what extent should we see these women, indeed perhaps see all musicians and music teachers (who as a class have tended to be relatively poorly paid), as making an immense "voluntary" contribution by the very act of doing the work they do and struggling against heavy odds to build the institutions that have furthered the cause of musical art (however one chooses to define that term)?¹⁹

But as important as it is to "set the record straight" (a major task in itself), three other more interpretive, evaluative questions arise. Of course, these questions arise in the midst of one's factual research and may to some extent drive or color that research; but, for purposes of discussion, I separate the *relatively* verifiable from the more plainly interpretive and disputable.

• Returning to privileged women, whose activities are relatively well documented: was work in the arts for them a largely frivolous time-passer, was it a better-than-nothing outlet for artistically (musically) talented women, was it a strategy for resistance in a situation of few "real choices" (to use Betty Friedan's term), or was it a truly gratifying chance for them to become influential operators in the public arena, without however risking the social disapproval or marital discord that might have accompanied any step into what was regarded as their husbands' proper sphere—e.g., business, the professions (including music), and politics? A particularly early instance of women's patronage of music in the U.S. is the trend toward women raising funds for organs to be installed in churches that had none (or had only an inadequate harmonium). In one Presbyterian church, in 1838, the women were told specifically

18. See Doris Evans McGinty, "As Large as She Can Make It': The Place of the Black Woman Activist in Music, 1880-1945," forthcoming in Locke and Barr, eds., *Cultivating Music*.

19. See Crawford, *American Musical Landscape*, 41-107 and 250-303.

by the (presumably all-male) consistory that they should cease their efforts. "There was an element of Scotch Presbyterianism in the church which was opposed to the instrument from principle," wrote a later chronicler, but the women "secured the signatures of sixty pewholders" and, "backed by the enthusiasm of the younger part of the church," they persisted and prevailed; the brouhaha led two deacons to step down and one elder to leave the church permanently.²⁰

- To what extent do these two "separate male and female spheres" actually intersect and interact; are we ourselves yielding to sexist stereotypes in presuming that men were uninterested in the arts and happy to leave such (presumably) decorative, non-essential activities to their wives?²¹ In general, it is not easy, at a century's distance, to separate out the mixed motivations that impelled a man such as Henry Lee Higginson to found and bankroll the Boston Symphony Orchestra for thirty-seven years, Edmond J. de Coppet to create the Flonzaley Quartette, or Otto Kahn to give millions to the Metropolitan Opera, even at a time when he, being of Jewish origin, was not permitted to buy a box of his own.²²

- Even though some men did actively care about and did work to stimulate the composition and performance of music (Higginson is a clear, if extreme, example), it remains undeniable that the activity of musical patronage tended to loom far

20. Rev. William H. Gleason, D. D., Pastor, *Semi-Centennial Celebration of the First Reformed Church, Hudson, N. Y., 1836[-]1886* (Hudson: M. Parker Williams, Register and Gazette, 1886), 39, as quoted in Stephen L. Pinel, "In the 1830s-60s: Women and Church Organs," forthcoming in Locke and Barr, eds., *Cultivating Music*.

21. See Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place," *Journal of American History* 75 (1988): 9-39. Also relevant to this whole discussion are the wide-ranging studies by Ann Douglas (*The Feminization of American Culture* [New York, 1977]) and Lawrence W. Levine (*Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* [Cambridge, 1988]); our researches further document, but also to some extent suggest revisions in, the portrayals in these and other widely cited studies. See Locke, "Music Lovers."

22. Locke, "Music Lovers."

larger in a *woman's* life, being tied up with her sense of herself as a cultured person, and often with her place in a social network—not least a social network of women. However gratifying this may have been to her, was music essentially serving as one more element in the domestication, the confinement of the potentially powerful, threatening, independent female?

This last question may give the impression that I am implying that middle-class women's support of music was simply another iron bar in the window of their comfortable prison, or a harmless distraction allowed them in that prison. I want to distance myself from such a one-sided interpretation, especially since there is more than a little danger that the evidence could be read precisely in that way. For example, the feminist literary critic Carolyn G. Heilbrun, in a recent essay, emphasizes almost entirely the emptiness of the life of the privileged woman of the past (she consistently puts "privileged" in quotation marks) and reminds us that some of them felt hesitant to express their dissatisfaction and deprivation, so aware were they of how paltry their suffering might appear in comparison to groups that were "oppressed or despised," as they were, only more obviously so.²³ Heilbrun's emphasis on the constricted destiny of the privileged woman is in this respect concordant with portrayals of the American "lady" in novels by Edith Wharton (*The Age of Innocence*, *The House of Mirth*) and Henry James (*Portrait of a Lady*) and with the caustic sociologizing of Thorstein Veblen or Rémy Saisselin.²⁴ The latter two, for example, explicitly argue, or even assume at the outset, that the lush home and lushly dressed wife were little more than trophies of the successful businessman or well-to-do physician.

23. "Non-Autobiographies of 'Privileged' Women: England and America," in Bella Brodzki and Celeste Schenck, eds., *Life/Lines: Theorizing Women's Autobiography* (Ithaca, 1988), 76.

24. Rémy Saisselin, *The Bourgeois and the Bibelot* (New Brunswick, 1984), based primarily on phenomena in France. Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) has often been reprinted.

But this male-centered view may actually be repeating, admittedly with a new twist, the historic pattern of treating the woman as an object; for it leaves out the daily texture of life as she made and felt it, a texture in which music, the arts, and their cultivation were prominent and often gratifying strands, along with religion, children, and more extended family and friendship connections. To suggest, as some writers come close to doing, that all this is inherently less useful or rewarding than life at a bank desk and largely unworthy of an intelligent and caring human being's attention and effort is to make the mistake, historian Bonnie G. Smith argues, of measuring all social arrangements by a single standard: the system of material production and market value. The life of the upper-middle-class woman, she urges, can more fruitfully be seen as involving to a large extent a network of purchases, activities, and personal relationships that she could determine herself, in conjunction with other women close to her, all under the embracing economy of (not *production* but) *reproduction*, in which women were responsible for nurturing the next generation of leaders for civilized society. (These leaders included, of course, businessmen, doctors, and preachers, but also the no less devoted and influential mothers, women schoolteachers, and advocates for the arts.) Women, Smith concludes, "tended to see the home as a microcosm, a holistic universe to which the industrial world was a subordinate support system."²⁵

25. Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoise of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton, 1981), 56. The comparison to mid-nineteenth-century French provincial women is of course not perfect; to a large extent we are dealing in our book with women in major cities (Boston, New York, Washington) who were active in the early *twentieth* century and who did operate in the public arena, where they successfully established outlets—though their labor was unpaid—for their copious managerial and creative energies; some idea of the scope of women volunteer workers in the building of a healthy concert life can be seen in Linda Whitesitt, "Women as Keepers of Musical Culture: Music Clubs, Community Concert Series, and Symphony Orchestras," forthcoming in Locke and Barr, eds., *Cultivating Music*.

In quoting Heilbrun and Parsons, and then Smith, I do not mean to set one point of view entirely against the other, but rather to show that the interpretive questions that I have sketched here are not easily resolved, and that the place of music in the larger picture of women's lives is one that we musicologists would do well to help define, since we know and care about it (music) more than do nearly all women's historians and cultural critics. The story of women's patronage of (or activism in) music can add welcome details to the still-unfinished "portrait of a lady." It also allows us to come face to face with a character from whom we can learn a lot about the problematic place of music in American society, then and now.