

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ISABELLA
STEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM**

***FREE Neighborhood Nights** at the Gardner Museum celebrate art, music, and community with live performances and art-making activities for the whole family*

Drawing inspiration from Isabella Stewart Gardner's passion for all the arts, this summer's free evening celebrations feature poetry, dance, and music performances and showcase local artists and performers.

Thursday Evenings, July 9, July 23 & August 6, 2009 | 5:00-8:00 pm | FREE for all!



Families enjoying art-making activities at the museum.
Photo by Lisa Abitbol, 2009.

BOSTON, JUNE 26, 2009 – The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum opens its doors to all this summer with a series of three *free Neighborhood Nights* filled with music and art and showcasing talented performers from surrounding communities.

A summer tradition now in its eighth year, these special evening celebrations feature an array of family-friendly activities, including musical performances, fun art-making projects related to the evening's theme, and the opportunity to enjoy the museum at twilight.

Highlights of this year's events include poetry, dance, bluegrass, jazz, and magic performances, as well as art-making activities in which visitors can create their own treasure chests, wind chimes, and jewelry to take home. Attendees can explore the museum's three floors of galleries, and will enjoy free admission to this summer's special contemporary exhibition, *Su-Mei Tse: Floating Memories* (on view July 16-October 18).

Neighborhood Nights at the Gardner Museum take place on three Thursday evenings -- July 9, July 23 and August 6 -- from 5 to 8 pm. Admission is completely free and includes all activities and performances, as well as access to the special exhibition and the museum's three floors of galleries.

This summer's *Neighborhood Nights* are made possible in part through the support of Bank of America, the official school and community partnerships sponsor of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

"Each summer, we look forward to welcoming our neighbors to the museum for these special events," says **Peggy Burchenal**, *Curator of Education and Public Programs*. "Isabella Gardner dedicated her museum to the education and enjoyment of the public forever, and events like *Neighborhood Nights* carry on that legacy by bringing people of all ages and backgrounds together to explore the museum on a beautiful summer night."

This summer's *Neighborhood Nights* kick off on July 9th with "Summer Palace," featuring jazzy contemporary poetry by **LIFE** and the swinging sounds of the **Patrice Williamson Group** alongside art-making activities including jewelry and treasure chests. On July 23rd, gardens are the theme: guests will enjoy seed planting and wind-chime making while getting down to the toe-tapping music of the **Berklee Bluegrass Band**. And on August 6th, celebrate the full moon with a strolling magician, a tarot card reader, an art activity incorporating found and reusable materials, and a performance by **Adrienne Hawkins, Larry Roland, and Impulse Dance Company**.

"SUMMER PALACE": Thursday, July 9 (5:00-8:00 pm)
Enjoy a summer evening of art, poetry, and music

- Listen to upbeat contemporary poetry by LIFE and let your dreams come alive.
- Create jazzy jewelry out of colorful pipe cleaners, wire, and beads.

- Decorate a mini treasure chest to store your own little treasures.
- Chill out to the feel-good vibes of the Patrice Williamson Group.
- AND enjoy FREE admission to the museum including access to:
 - Summer courtyard garden display featuring lace-cap hydrangeas, Cape Primrose, and Delphinium.

“PLEASURE GARDENS”: Thursday, July 23 (5:00-8:00 pm)

Celebrate Isabella Gardner’s love for plants, flowers, and gardens

- Our beautiful courtyard garden will inspire you to decorate your own flower pot.
- Plant seeds in peat pots to grow at home.
- Create a musical wind chime to enhance your outdoor space.
- Listen to the toe-tapping music of the Berklee Bluegrass Band.
- AND enjoy FREE admission to the museum including access to:
 - *Su-Mei Tse: Floating Memories* (on view July 16-October 18), the Gardner’s current contemporary exhibition.
 - Summer courtyard garden display featuring lace-cap hydrangeas, Cape Primrose, and Delphinium.

“FULL MOON RISING”: Thursday, August 6 (5:00-8:00 p.m.)

A magical journey from twilight to moonlight

- Meet and greet Joe the Roving Magician and see what magic happens before your very eyes!
- Take a peek into the past, present, and future with tarot card reader Kasey Robinsong.
- Create your own magical world in a box with different found and reusable materials.
- Enjoy Bass-Line Motion’s presentation of *Analog Love in a Digital World* featuring Adrienne Hawkins and Larry Roland with Impulse Dance Company.
- AND enjoy FREE admission to the museum including access to:
 - *Su-Mei Tse: Floating Memories* (on view July 16-October 18), the Gardner’s current contemporary exhibition.
 - Summer courtyard garden display featuring lace-cap hydrangeas, Cape Primrose, and Delphinium.

Bank of America is the official school and community partnerships sponsor of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Additional funding for *Neighborhood Nights* is generously provided by the Louise Crane Foundation, the Mabel Louise Riley Foundation, and the Rowland Foundation. The Gardner Museum receives operating support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Special thanks to the museum’s *Community Advisory Committee*: Stephen Bell, John Hancock Financial Services; Allouma Clair and Marlene DaCosta, Beth Israel Hospital; Barbara Jones Finley, Dana Farber Cancer Institute; Crystal Moore, Mass General Hospital; Frank Oglesby, MBTA; Nicole Reid, Consultant; Alan Wade, Massport.

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM • A Unique Environment for Learning • 280 The Fenway Boston MA 02115 617.566.1401 www.gardnermuseum.org • Tue.-Sun., 11 am-5 pm • \$12 adults; \$10 seniors; \$5 students; \$2 off with same day Museums of Fine Arts admission; FREE children under 18, everyone on his or her birthday, and all named “Isabella” • Built in the style of a 15th-century Venetian palazzo, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is a magical place, unlike any other museum in the world. With three floors of galleries displaying over 30 centuries of art surrounding a lush indoor courtyard garden, this unique space fires the imagination and offers a one-of-a-kind experience and opportunity for learning and engagement in all the arts have to offer. In 2007, the Gardner Museum completed an important three-year, Department Of Education (DOE)-funded study into the effects of arts education on the development of critical thinking skills in young children. The study found that elementary school students from Boston public schools who visited the Gardner repeatedly to learn to look at and talk about art showed significant improvements in critical thinking skills crucial for learning. Gains in skills including close observation, interpretation, and problem solving demonstrate that visiting museums is a valuable learning experience for school-age children, and complements the education they receive in school. More information about this study and the importance of arts in education is online at: <http://www.gardnermuseum.org/education/tta/tta.html>.

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Brittany Duncan *Publicist* w 617 278 5106 bduncan@isgm.org

Katherine Armstrong *Public Relations Director* w 617 278 5107 c 617 956 2565 karmstrong@isgm.org

EDITORS’ NOTE: This release announces an upcoming series of three **FREE community events at the Gardner Museum** in the Fenway – featuring local artists, performers, and musicians, and guests of all ages from neighborhoods including the Fenway, Brookline, Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, Roxbury, Chinatown, and the South End.

Reporters, photographers and film crews are encouraged to attend and cover these free, highly-visual community events. Artists, performers and guests are available for advance and/or at-event interviews by request. Free parking can be arranged by the Gardner Museum for members of the media.