

ISABELLA
STEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM

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**George Steel named new Abrams Curator of Music at the
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum**



BOSTON, MA (November 2017) – The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is pleased to announce that George Steel will become the new *Abrams Curator of Music*, beginning in January 2018. Steel, a nationally acclaimed musician and impresario, will lead the Museum's renowned music program, including the Sunday classical music series, the RISE rock, pop, hip hop concerts, and new creative initiatives in the performing arts.

Steel has been the Museum's Visiting Curator for Performing Arts since March 2017, designing invigorating multi-disciplinary programming ranging from chamber music, to dance, cabaret, theater, spoken word, poetry readings, Renaissance polyphony, and jazz pop-up events. In his expanded role, he will be responsible for all music programming and increased performing arts activity, as well as all public programming. His aim will be to create and produce performances across genres to animate the Museum's historic and contemporary spaces, and to deepen the public's connection to the collection and exhibitions. Steel will build on Isabella Stewart Gardner's legacy and her vision of the Museum as a hotbed for creativity in all forms.

"We are overjoyed that a talent as versatile as George Steel will lead the Gardner's highly respected music department," said Peggy Fogelman, the Museum's *Norma Jean Calderwood Director*. "He comes with a breadth of experience, directing music from classical, operatic, and vocal traditions, and is a deeply skilled trailblazer in performing arts. This magical combination is essential to our efforts to broaden the creative reach of the Museum—just as Isabella envisioned."

Steel came to the Gardner Museum last spring after being General Manager and Artistic Director of the New York City Opera from 2009 to 2013. He was Executive Director of Columbia University's performing arts venue, Miller Theatre, for 11 years. He is also the founder and conductor of the Vox Vocal Ensemble and the Gotham City Orchestra.

"The opportunity to curate the Gardner Museum's extraordinary classical music program—which enthusiastic audiences flock to, and which I have admired for years—is nothing short of thrilling," Steel said. "We aim to grow, pushing our performance programming to new heights."

During his tenure at the New York City Opera, Steel produced some of the company's most acclaimed work, including new productions of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*, Rossini's *Mose in Egitto*, and Offenbach's *La Perichole*, as well as the New York stage premieres of Leonard Bernstein's *A Quiet Place*, Thomas Ades's *Powder Her Face*, Morton Feldman's *Neither*, John Zorn's *La Machine de L'Etre*, and Mark Anthony Turnage's *Anna Nicole*.

Steel has worked with a long list of artists in many disciplines including Odetta, Rufus Wainwright, Kristin Chenoweth, Maurizio Pollini, Mavis Staples, Elizabeth Diller, Max Roach, E.V. Day, Ralph Lemon, Yo-Yo Ma, Lou Reed, Zakir Hussain, Wendy Whelan, Ornette Coleman, Iannis Xenakis, Ray Barretto, Rebecca Taichman, Steve Reich, Kehinde Wiley, Pierre Boulez, John Zorn, Frisner Augustin, Christopher Wheeldon, Jennifer Steinkamp, Simon Shaheen, and Leonard Bernstein, among many, many others.

The New York Times called Steel "a spokesman of national stature about ways to make classical music matter to new generations of listeners."

A well-regarded music educator, he taught at St. Augustine School of the Arts in the 1980s. He has taught and spoken at a variety of places from Aspen Music Festival, Yale, and Columbia to Operahögskolans in Stockholm.

A composer and conductor, he has received BMI's Harrington Award "for Outstanding Creative Achievement in Musical Theatre" as well as the Trailblazer Award from the American Music Center and the ASCAP Concert Music Award. He has twice received the Chamber Music America Award for Adventurous Programming.

Steel succeeds Scott Nickrenz who was the Abrams Curator of Music from 1990-2017.

The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum - a magical creation of one woman's daring vision - invites you to awaken your senses and be transported. Modeled after a Venetian palazzo, unforgettable galleries surround a luminous courtyard and are home to masters such as Rembrandt, Raphael, Titian, Michelangelo, Whistler, and Sargent. The Renzo Piano wing provides a platform for contemporary artists, musicians, and scholars, and serves as an innovative venue where creativity is celebrated in all of its forms.

Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum • 25 Evans Way Boston MA 02215 • Hours: Open Daily from 11a.m. to 5 p.m. and Thursdays until 9 p.m. Closed Tuesdays. • Admission: Adults \$15; Seniors \$12; Students \$5; Free for members, children under 18, everyone on his/her birthday, and all named "Isabella" • \$2 off admission with a same-day Museum of Fine Arts, Boston ticket • For information 617 566 1401 • Box Office 617 278 5156 • www.gardnermuseum.org

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