

**A Harmonious Ensemble: A History of the Musical Instruments Department,  
1884-2014  
By Rebecca M. Lindsey<sup>1</sup>**

**Foreword**

The Department of Musical Instruments at The Metropolitan Museum of Art is home to one of the premier collections of musical instruments in the world. The Met's musical instruments collection includes treasures that document the history of musical culture through time and from around the world—including the earliest surviving piano built by Bartolomeo Cristofori, three violins by the famed Cremonese violin maker Antonio Stradivari, the concert guitars used by Andrés Segovia, a Ming dynasty Chinese ivory *pipa*, and an extraordinary seventeenth-century Japanese *koto*.

The Met's collection of instruments has a remarkable history and has occupied an important role in both the development of musical scholarship related to instruments and in the understanding of historical performance practices. The majority of the pieces in the collection today were acquired at least a century ago, and the work of amassing and cataloging them included correspondence with academics, curators, dealers, missionaries, and collectors around the globe. It was a part of a great wave of scholarship regarding musical instruments happening in Europe and the United States, and the Museum's Collection was at the forefront of that work.

The publication of this departmental history draws from the Department of Musical Instruments' and the Museum's remarkable archives, which include correspondence of the Brown family, donors of over 3000 instruments between 1889-1915; David Mannes, for thirty years the conductor of free symphony concerts at the Museum; and early curators Frances Morris and Emanuel Winternitz. This history also exists in a digital version on the Museum website at [], which allows the story of this rich history to be told alongside hours of multimedia content spanning historic lectures, performances, artist interviews, Audio Guide stops, and publicity newsreels. The history represents a tremendous amount of work and the culmination of years of research by departmental volunteer and Department of Musical Instruments Visiting Committee Member Rebecca Lindsey.

Jayson Kerr Dobney  
Associate Curator and Administrator, Department of Musical Instruments  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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<sup>1</sup> Member, Visiting Committee, Departments of Musical Instruments and Islamic Art.

## Acknowledgments

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*Japanese Oni carrying a festival processional gong, early 19th century. Kyoto, Japan. Metal, wood, lacquer, polychrome. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.2016a–e). Curator Frances Morris's 1920 notes for this instrument state: —“Generic name for devils. Onis have claws, a square head with two horns, and malignant eyes surmounted by eyebrows. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of Jan. they are expelled from houses with a spell and a bun of roasted black peas.”*

## Introduction

The Metropolitan Museum's encyclopedic view of art is nowhere better illustrated than in its 130-year-old Collection of thousands of musical instruments. The Collection of the Department of Musical Instruments is among the world's largest, and its history has some of the Museum's most colorful characters.<sup>2</sup> Instruments were prominent in the Museum's displays by 1885, and by the 1940s the Department's activities regularly attracted national attention. The Museum completely suppressed the Department for more than a decade, however, and the instrument galleries were twice closed for many years. Musical Instruments obtained an assured future only in the 1970s. The following are highlights of this story.<sup>3</sup>

In the mid-nineteenth century throughout Europe and America, a number of trends converged to bring about a boom in museum development. In New York, as elsewhere, successful citizens founded museums, libraries, botanical gardens, and the like, because they believed strongly in the value of universal education. The Metropolitan Museum of Art was part of this movement, and its 1870 charter included education as a purpose—education not only for the upper classes, traditional patrons of the arts, but for workers and tradespeople.<sup>4</sup> Early installations at the Museum included the traditional fine arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, but also featured the so-called "industrial," or decorative arts—art objects which served a purpose: whether to play, like a violin; to eat from, like a plate; or to look in, like a mirror.

The Museum's first Central Park building was opened by President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880 with thirty thousand square feet of exhibit space arranged around the four sides of a central courtyard. One floor showed works owned by the Museum, and a second displayed works on loan, mostly from the personal collections of the trustees. Because the Museum owned so little, there were no significant constraints on what loans or gifts it would accept other than the taste of the trustees and of the Director they appointed in 1879, the dashing mustachioed Emanuele Pietro Paolo Maria Luigi Palma di Cesnola.<sup>5</sup> The first Cesnola displays were, to say the least, an eclectic mix; among the bronzes and terracottas there were nearly a dozen small archaic objects

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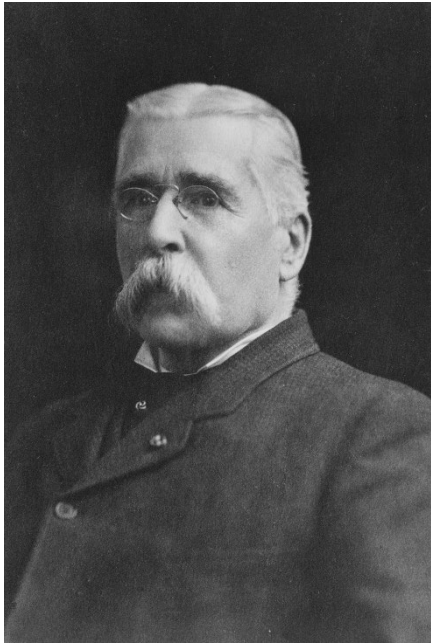
<sup>2</sup> The Department was not formally created until 1949, but for simplicity the terms "the Department" and "the Collection" are used here, regardless of date.

<sup>3</sup> The primary source materials on which this article is based are in the Department and Museum archives. Papers of the Department's first curator, Emanuel Winternitz, were moved out of the Department of Musical Instruments and preserved after his death in 1983 by Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Curator Dr. Olga Raggio, who died in 2008; these have recently been reviewed for the first time.

<sup>4</sup> The Charter statement of purposes includes: "encouraging and developing the study of the fine arts, and the application of arts to manufacture and practical life . . . and, to that end, of furnishing popular instruction."

<sup>5</sup> Cesnola invariably referred to himself as "General," though he was criticized for doing so when his rank was a brevet commission. Cesnola was not a trained archaeologist, but while serving as United States Consul in Cyprus he personally excavated and purchased numerous Cypriote artifacts, brought them to Europe and the United States, and sold them to the Museum. Some remain as accessioned objects today.

now identified as bells or rattles, but the Museum did not possess anything which a nineteenth-century museum-goer would have thought of as a musical instrument.<sup>6</sup> That was soon to change.



*Luigi Palma di Cesnola, MMA Director, 1879–1904.*

## **A Great Debut, 1884–1908**

### **Joseph Drexel**

In 1880 William Earl Dodge, Jr., Chairman of the Museum's Executive Committee, wrote to Cesnola in words that would be quite recognizable to any museum administrator today: "Cultivate Mr. Drexel, who will be a most valuable and liberal friend of the museum."<sup>7</sup> "Mr. Drexel" was Joseph William Drexel, a banker and partner of J.P. Morgan, who in 1876 retired from business to devote himself to charity. His music manuscripts became the basis for the Music division of the New York Public Library. He also collected musical instruments.

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<sup>6</sup> These bells and rattles were accessioned with the rest of the Museum's Cesnola purchases in 1874, in the very earliest stages of the Museum's collecting history. All are dated between 1600–400 B.C., and today all are in the collections of the Department of Greek and Roman Art.

<sup>7</sup> Letter, Dodge to Cesnola, January 1, 1880.



*Jacob Hart Lazarus (1822–1891). Joseph W. Drexel, 1877. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Joseph W. Drexel, 1896 (96.23).*

Drexel responded promptly to Cesnola's approach, and offered to let Museum personnel "look over his [art] collection" to select what they would like to exhibit.<sup>8</sup> Cesnola chose eight paintings, which were accessioned in 1880, and the following year Drexel was elected a Museum trustee. In 1884 Drexel made another offer: "While in Paris I spent some time forming a collection of old musical instruments, obsolete forms which with some I have already would fill two or three cases and, I think, be most interesting to a museum, in fact, I formed the collection for the Metropolitan Museum—I shall take the liberty of sending the boxes up . . . [if you accept them] I shall add many manuscripts from my collection . . . I will arrange the whole [exhibit]

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<sup>8</sup> Letter, Drexel to Samuel P. Avery (founding member and lifelong trustee of the Museum), March 1, 1880.

myself."<sup>9</sup> The Museum's Committee on Art Objects recommended acceptance, and the 1886 annual report enumerated under "Donations of Works of Art During the Year 1885," the gift of "a large collection of ancient musical instruments . . . consisting of harpsichords, mandolins, violins, and other stringed instruments . . ."<sup>10</sup>

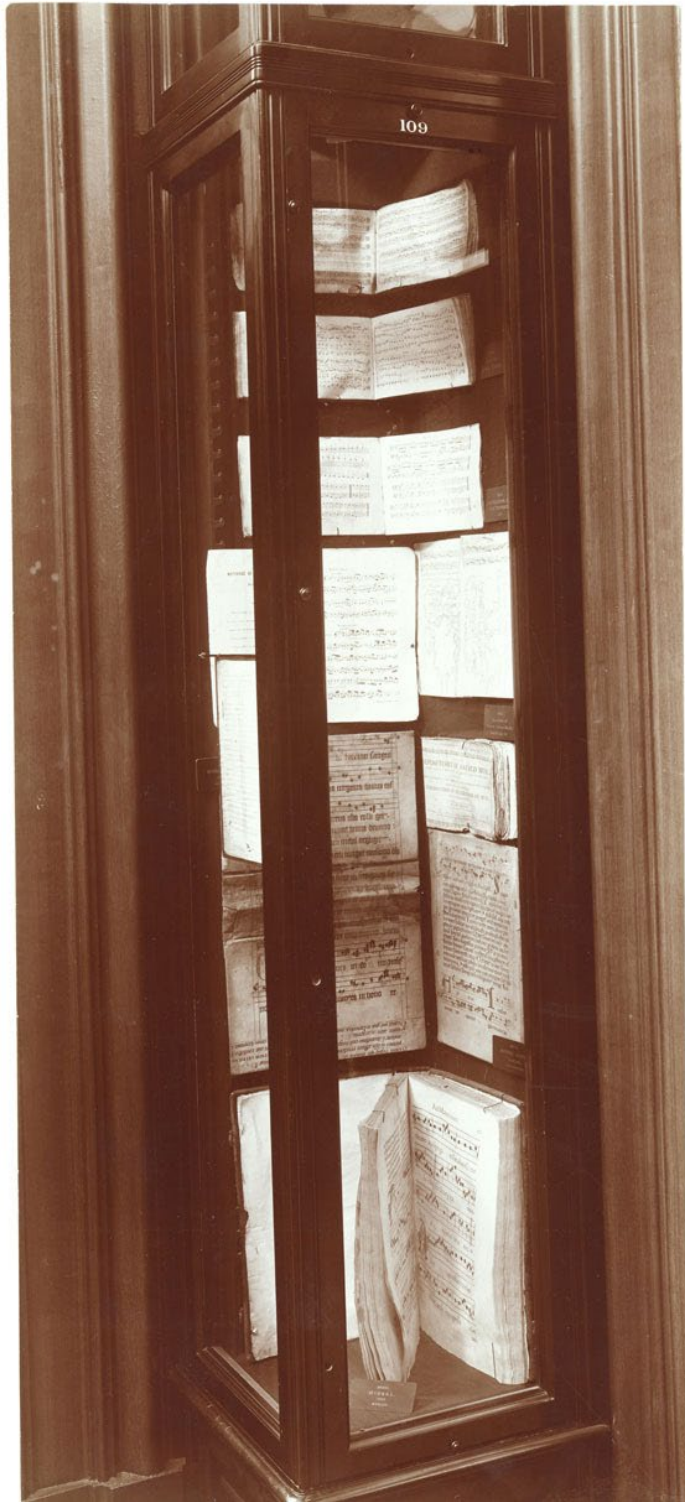


*One of the Drexel instruments which came to the Museum in 1885. Sixtus Rauchwolff (German, 1556–1619). Lute, 1596. Wood, various other materials. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Joseph W. Drexel, 1889 (89.2.157).*

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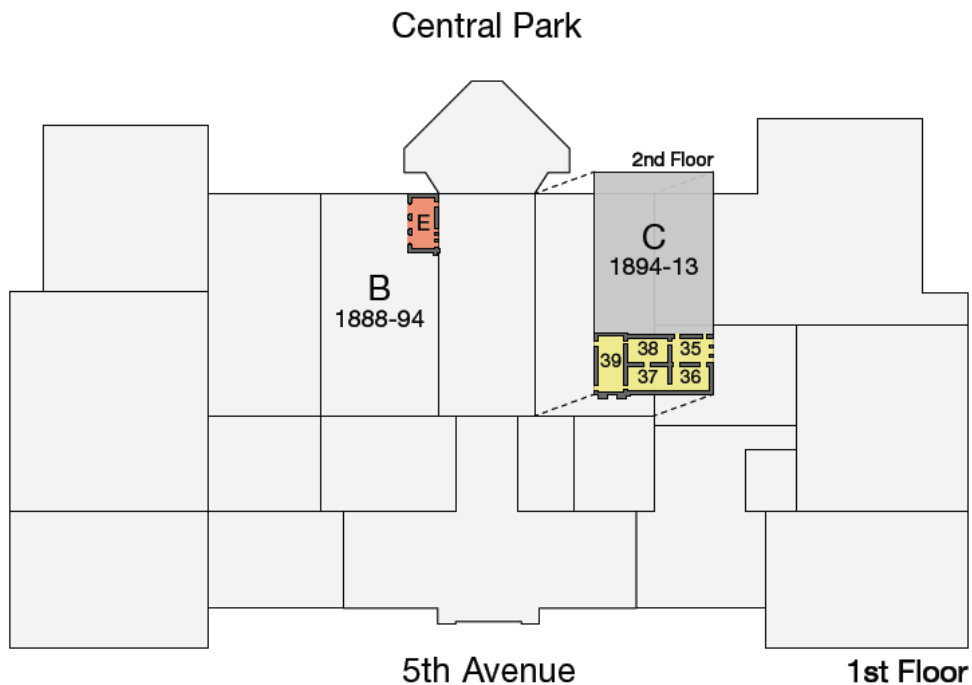
<sup>9</sup> Letter, Drexel to Cesnola, December 17, 1884.

<sup>10</sup> Drexel was already aware that musical instruments were interesting to the public: several of his had been displayed in December 1883 at the loan exhibition put together by the National Academy of Design to raise money for the construction of the pedestal for the Statue of Liberty. Drexel had lent music manuscripts, a "Japanese guitar," a Malay musical instrument, a viola da gamba, and a viola d'amore. *Catalogue of the Pedestal Fund Art Loan Exhibition* (New York: 1883), 7–8.



*Manuscripts from the Drexel collection, as displayed in the two-tier corner case designed for the 1914 first floor musical instrument galleries and installed in Gallery 35, European Instruments, in September 1914.*

In the fall of 1885 Drexel personally arranged approximately forty-four instruments at the Museum, and his donation was widely reported in the press accounts of the Museum's winter exhibit opening on November 2, 1885.<sup>11</sup> Some of the instruments came from Syria, Japan, China, Arabia, Africa, and the United States, but the great majority were Western European. With them were displayed psalters, antiphonaries, and other manuscripts from his collection; these are now dispersed in the Museum's Medieval and Islamic collections and the library. In the next three years Drexel donated another spinet and harpsichord,<sup>12</sup> and strong-armed other trustees to match his donation so that the Museum could acquire another harpsichord.<sup>13</sup>



### Musical Instruments Gallery Spaces 1885-1913

About the time that Drexel died, in 1888, the Museum's first major building addition, Wing B, opened. The Drexel instruments were installed in Room 4 (later E) at the northwest corner of the ground floor of the new wing.<sup>14</sup> There the "room of carved wood and musical instruments" featured "a fine Norwegian reindeer sledge" as well as the Drexel musical instruments and a

<sup>11</sup> *E.g.*, *The Art Union*, Vol. 2, No. 5, November 1885, 94. Several newspaper accounts of this opening state that the Drexel donation is not yet available for public inspection. *E.g.*, *New York Tribune*, November 1, 1885; *New York Star*, November 2, 1885.

<sup>12</sup> Letter, Drexel to Cesnola, September 29, 1887.

<sup>13</sup> Receipt, from J.L. Chapman to the Museum, March 23, 1886.

<sup>14</sup> *The Cosmopolitan, A Monthly Illustrated Magazine*, December 1888, Vol. 6, No. 2, 130. The Museum began designating its wings with letters in 1907 and discontinued the practice one hundred years later, but for clarity the wing designations are used here for all dates. *See* diagrams above.



clock. Thus within a few years of its Central Park opening, the Museum's displays included a musical instruments collection—not just a haphazard couple of instruments included with furniture, but a comprehensive display including non-Western as well as European instruments, put together by a knowledgeable collector with the means to obtain pieces of the first rank. Significantly, there was no questioning by the press, the trustees, or the public, of the appropriateness of the Drexel collection for an art museum. Because Drexel had concentrated primarily on sophisticated "court"-style instruments, rather than folk or aboriginal ones, and perhaps also because his donation included illuminated manuscripts which were clearly "art," it fit right into an institution where decorative art objects of the most sophisticated workmanship, in things like lacemaking and china, were from the beginning deemed appropriate for display.

Today the Department recognizes the Drexel donation as far more significant than its size or early date suggests. Five years after Drexel's gift, the first installment of what would eventually be almost four thousand objects in the Crosby Brown Collection arrived at the Museum. They were given to the Museum because the Met already had an instrument collection; shortly after Drexel's donation arrived at the Museum, in October 1885, Mary Elizabeth Brown (Mrs. John Crosby Brown)—who had bought her first four musical instruments only the year before—arranged to visit the Drexel collection. Before that time, neither Mr. nor Mrs. Brown had any connection to the Museum, but as a result of seeing the Drexel collection, when Mrs. Brown was ready to part with her own instruments, she offered them to the Metropolitan, and not to any of the other educational or cultural institutions her family supported. She told the trustees that she was sending them her collection because it complemented the Drexel collection, and in the November 1888 catalogue her son prepared of the instruments she later donated to the Museum, she acknowledged the "Drexel collection at the Metropolitan Museum" as one of the three most important instrument collections in the country.<sup>15</sup>

Drexel's small "seed" of forty-four choice instruments thus benefitted the Museum almost one hundredfold. It was a worthy beginning, and a fine prelude for the work of the largest donor in the Department's history.

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<sup>15</sup> Newspaper accounts in February 1889 of the Brown donation to the Museum noted that in the United States only three other public instrument collections (the Drexel collection at the Met, the collection at Boston's National Conservatory, and the collection at the National Museum [now the Smithsonian] in Washington) "can claim rank with Mrs. Brown's"; see also David C. Preyer, *The Art of the Metropolitan Museum of New York City* (Boston: L. C. Page, 1908), 393: "An early gift from Mr. Joseph W. Drexel . . . brought to the Museum the collection gathered by Mrs. John Crosby Brown;" William Adams Brown, *Musical Instruments and Their Homes* (New York: 1888), vii.

**Mary Elizabeth Adams Brown**



*Portrait of Mary Elizabeth Adams Brown holding a mandolin (89.4.1043) from her collection.*<sup>16</sup>  
"I know of no such collection in any other museum—it seems especially appropriate in an Art Museum, and worth all it costs in effort, time and money."

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<sup>16</sup> Anders Zorn (Swedish, 1860–1920). Mrs. John Crosby Brown (Mary Elizabeth Adams, 1842–1918), ca. 1900. Oil on canvas. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Eliza Coe Moore, 1959 (60.85).

This was Mary Elizabeth Adams Brown, a mother of six without formal musical connections. She did have other relationships which were important as she became an instrument collector: she had been links to the Presbyterian Church establishment; and her husband was John Crosby Brown, a partner in Brown Brothers & Co.<sup>17</sup> She was 43 years old in the fall of 1885 when Drexel installed his instruments at the Museum, and just one year earlier she had commissioned a cousin to spend fifty dollars in Florence to buy four instruments to decorate the music room at the family country house in New Jersey.<sup>18</sup>

The choice of musical instruments as an area of collecting is not as surprising as it might seem today. In the late nineteenth century, the playing of musical instruments was integral to everyday life for Europeans and Americans across all walks of life. Skill on one or more instruments was extremely common; knowledge of the classical musical canon was widespread; and instruments were routinely a part of all but the poorest homes—a small organ or upright piano and a fiddle, perhaps, for a lower middle class household, and a "music room" for the more educated or affluent households. The Browns' music room and instrument collection were, at first, typical of their time and place, and so was the Museum's welcoming of the Brown and Drexel collections. The confidence of the trustees in the appeal of instruments to the viewing public was soon shown to be well placed. In 1891, after a bitter disagreement among the trustees, the Museum began opening on Sundays. The standard work week was then Monday–Saturday, so Sunday was the only time when working people could visit. As the *New York Times* reported after the first Sunday opening: "The collection of musical instruments probably held the most interested crowd all day."<sup>19</sup> (Thereafter, for many years, the Museum was open 365 days per year.)

The method of Mary Elizabeth Brown's first Museum contact was characteristic—not for her the anonymous visit during regular hours. Instead, she contacted her friend trustee William C. Prime, who was so devoted to the Museum that he personally packed and unpacked much of the collection for the 1880 building opening.<sup>20</sup> Prime promptly notified Cesnola: "I spoke to you about my desire to have Mrs. J. Crosby Brown examine the Drexel gift of musical instruments . . . you will gladly place the collection at her service."<sup>21</sup> Cesnola "gladly" did so—indeed, he spent a large part of the next twenty years, until his death in 1904, continuously placing himself at the Browns' service. In return, he, and the Museum, eventually got approximately 3600 items to add to the Drexel collection of forty-four instruments. More than a century later, the Brown donations still constitute approximately half of the objects in the Department of Musical Instruments.

From Brown's first visit to see the Drexel instruments in 1885, there was no immediate result. Instead, she spent the next three years enlarging her collection. The Browns' country house was

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<sup>17</sup> *Evangelist*, May 16, 1901.

<sup>18</sup> They were an eighteenth-century Savoyard harp (89.4.1081), a nineteenth-century Padua mandolin (89.4.1066), a late eighteenth-century Viennese five-octave piano (89.4.1214), and an Italian eighteenth-century serpent (89.4.1090).

<sup>19</sup> *The New York Times*, June 8, 1891, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Winifred Howe, *A History of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: 1913), 181–82.

<sup>21</sup> Letter, Prime to Cesnola, December 17, 1885.

a rambling Victorian mansion, but even so, by 1888, when the collection numbered 276 instruments, the music room was at its bursting point. But Brown had a plan: she had her son, William Adams Brown, aged 22 and a graduate student at Union Theological Seminary, make pen and ink drawings of 270 of her instruments, and complete a catalogue of them, published by Dodd, Mead as *Musical Instruments and Their Homes*, in 1888.<sup>22</sup> The catalogue was the first of its kind in the United States, and most unusually, 329 of its 366 pages, and all of the scholarly text, were devoted to the music and instruments of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, the Americas and Oceanica. European instruments are illustrated at the end almost as an afterthought.

Brown realized her plan on February 16, 1889, when she sent the Museum a copy of the book and offered the trustees her collection—which, she noted, had already been catalogued and illustrated, and which complemented the Drexel collection in that its strength was in the area of "oriental nations, and savage tribes," where Drexel's was in European instruments. Brown set highly unusual and stringent conditions on her offer: she reserved the right, for her own lifetime and that of William Adams Brown (who lived until 1943), to exercise an unspecified degree of "control" and "oversight" over the collection, including the ability to add or withdraw instruments at will. The offer letter specifically mentioned Brown's intention to enlarge the collection over time, though it is unlikely that the trustees had any idea what that was going to mean; indeed, there is no evidence that Brown herself realized the scope of what she was going to do.

There was never any question about the response to Brown's offer: two days after she dispatched it, the Museum trustees met at Cornelius Vanderbilt's house to accept 266 instruments, with "an appropriate resolution of thanks." Because of the value of the collection (estimated as between \$35,000 and \$50,000), the Museum executive committee also immediately elected Brown and her son William Adams Brown as "Patrons" of the Museum,<sup>23</sup> and soon elected John Crosby Brown a trustee.<sup>24</sup>

From the very beginning, however, there was debate about whether the non-Western portion of the Crosby Brown Collection represented art, suitable for the Metropolitan Museum, or rather

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<sup>22</sup> Brown herself apparently intended to write the text for this catalogue, with her son handling the drawings and descriptions of each instrument. She began to write a preface for it, but almost immediately turned the project over in its entirety to her son, who did a remarkable job of scholarship in a few short months.

<sup>23</sup> *Musical Courier*, Vol. 18, No. 8; February 20, 1889, 147; Trustee Minutes, Vol. 3, 24–25; Exec. Comm. Minutes, Vol. 3, 248. At that time "Patron" was a lifetime title awarded to the most significant benefactors by vote of the Museum Trustees. Brown's subsequent donations eventually got her an even more exclusive, hereditary title, "Benefactor in Perpetuity," which her son William Adams and grandsons John Crosby and James Crosby assumed in turn. This title was discontinued by the Museum before the Brown's great-grandchildren could inherit.

<sup>24</sup> The Museum had no women trustees until 1952; John Crosby Brown was elected a trustee in 1893, resigned later that year, but was reelected in 1895 and served until his death; from 1905 he also served as treasurer of the Museum.

ethnography, better destined for a science or teaching museum.<sup>25</sup> The first publication questioning the gift came less than a month after it was announced: the *New York Tribune* and the *Musical Courier*, a prominent trade publication, noted:

It would, of course, be a pity to divide the collection of musical instruments which Mrs. John Crosby Brown has generously given to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but its value for scientific purposes would be greater if it were brought into relation with the ethnological specimens at the Museum of Natural History. The most valuable portion of it has a greater scientific than artistic value, which is just the reverse of the case with the Drexel collection in the Metropolitan Museum.<sup>26</sup>

This disagreement intensified after Brown's death in 1918, and was only completely resolved in the late 1960s when a major endowment legally ensured permanent Departmental exhibition galleries, but it never seems to have affected Brown and she never acknowledged any reason to limit or refocus her donations.<sup>27</sup>

The Brown gift became the John Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, not the Mary Elizabeth Brown Collection; Mrs. Brown subscribed to the theory that no lady wanted publicity around her name. For the rest of her life she declined requests for interviews or personal information in connection with the Collection,<sup>28</sup> and her husband and son also acted in matters relating to the Collection, perhaps to help her avoid the limelight.<sup>29</sup> Mr. Brown had primary responsibility for communicating with the Museum, and for negotiating about physical space, staff assistance, and cataloguing the Collection. But he was less involved with the selection of the collection that bore his name, and though supportive of his wife's efforts, he seems not to have shared all of her enthusiasm for exotic instruments. Instead, as a businessman, he

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<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., David C. Preyer, *The Art of the Metropolitan Museum of New York City* (Boston: L. C. Page, 1908, 392): "The broad conception which the Metropolitan Museum of Art has of Art is demonstrated in the admission of this section, which properly might be considered to be an adjunct to a national conservatory of music."

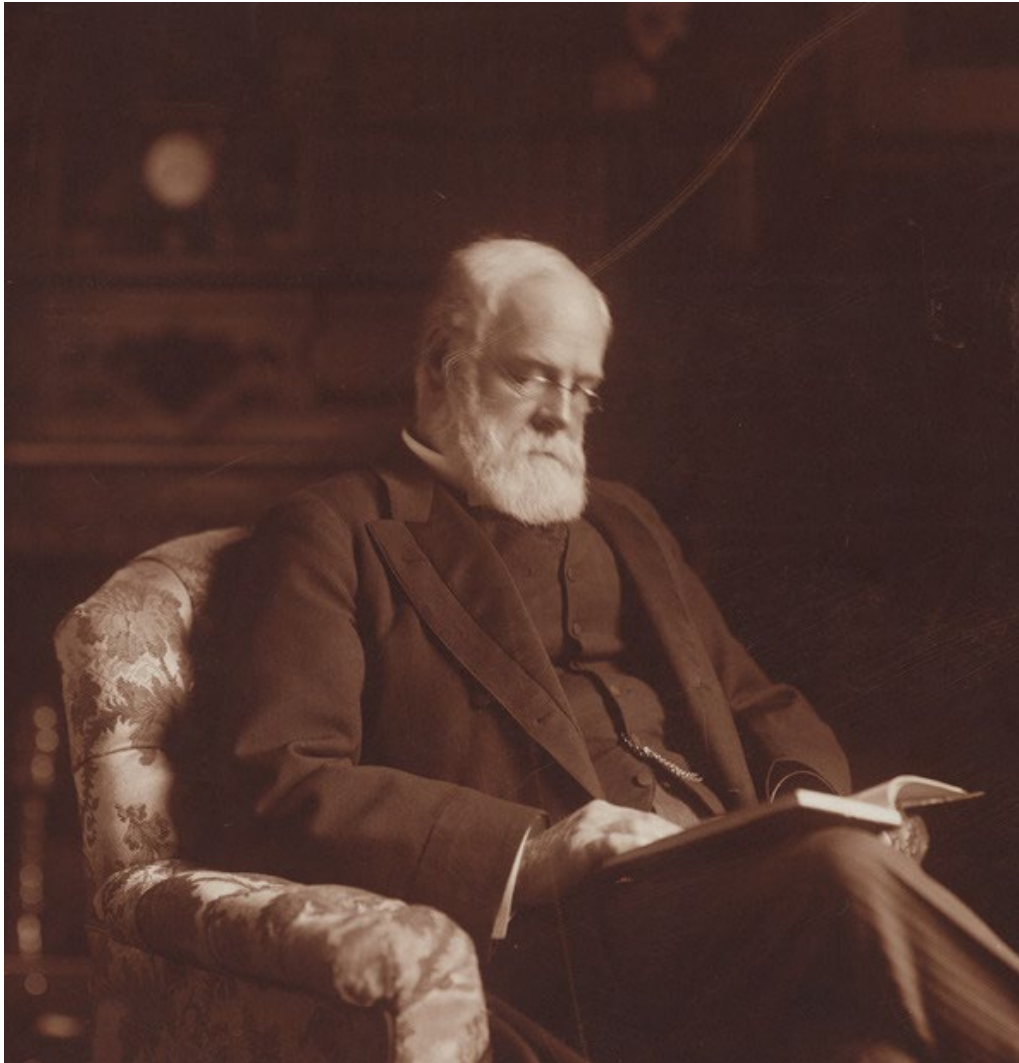
<sup>26</sup> *Musical Courier*, Vol. 18, No. 10, March 6, 1889, 196.

<sup>27</sup> In fact, Brown herself donated a large number of instruments to the American Museum of Natural History during the same years she was collecting for the Metropolitan. She clearly believed that musical instruments should be part of both institutions.

<sup>28</sup> See, e.g., letter, Morris to Rosa Jefferson of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, November 19, 1906: "Mrs. Brown is not willing that her photograph should appear in connection with the collection, and does not care to be 'written up' in the press."

<sup>29</sup> *Annual Report of the Trustees for 1894*, 605; *New York Evening Post*, Monday, February 11, 1895, 2. For instance, in 1894 when a new display of the instruments opened in Wing C of the Museum, William Adams Brown, by then teaching at Union Theological Seminary, was pressed into service to give a series of lectures on *The Evolution of Musical Instruments*; according to the Museum's rather lukewarm report, he "acceptably delivered" them. Interestingly, William Adams Brown gave three lectures in this series; a fourth was given by "the only man in the country who knew how to play the obsolete keyboard instruments, and he will bring his instruments with him and show their use." *New York Independent*, November 15, 1894.

recognized that the Collection presented an opportunity to obtain items which would soon be unobtainable at any price because the cultures that produced them were vanishing. Thus in writing to the Raja Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore, donor of a fine collection of Indian instruments, Mr. Brown noted that Mrs. Brown's collection also included "some curious specimens of instruments used by the North American Indians. They can scarcely be called 'musical instruments,' but they are interesting, as illustrating their musical ideas, and are valuable as in a few years it will be almost impossible to procure any of them."<sup>30</sup>



*John Crosby Brown, circa 1902. Photo courtesy of the Brown family.*

### **Mary Elizabeth Brown, the Instruments, and the Museum**

Brown's interest, and choices shaped the majority of the Museum's musical instrument collection for fifty years, but her role was collecting instruments—either choosing items to purchase, or agreeing to pay for items offered for sale to the Museum by others. She never played an active

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<sup>30</sup> Letter, May 19, 1887.

role inside the Museum—indeed, she very rarely visited the Museum. At the time of her offer, of course, there was no Department of Musical Instruments, and there would not officially be one until 1949. The Museum was still young; the displays were still heavily dependent on borrowed material; the director was still the ex-soldier Cesnola (as a later Museum director said, "General di Cesnola's services . . . had not been especially notable in the realm of scholarship")<sup>31</sup>; and the trustees, who made all important decisions, were charitably inclined businessmen, not versed in professional curatorial practice. The Museum initially had only one curator—referred to as "the" curator—a university professor appointed in 1882; in 1885, General Cesnola decided that the Museum should triple its scholarly staff to three—one curator each for Painting, Sculpture, and Plaster Casts; that number sufficed into the twentieth century. Musical instruments were classified as decorative arts, also referred to as "bric-a-brac,"<sup>32</sup> and were the responsibility of the Curator of Sculpture, Professor Isaac Hall, an authority on Oriental languages, especially Cypriot.<sup>33</sup>

Hall's role with respect to the instrument collection was more administrative than curatorial. He received deliveries of instruments, and sent reports to Brown about the public appreciation of the displays of her collection. In accordance with the terms of her first gift, however, so long as she could obtain a donation or was willing to pay for an instrument, it was she, not he, who had the right to decide whether to add it to the collection. In effect, Brown could require the trustees to accession whatever she recommended, without consulting Curator Hall. Brown, her son, and those whom she enlisted as photographers, cataloguers, and the like, also dealt directly with the Museum director and trustees who assigned space within the Museum, not with Hall. The arrangement was, to say the least, unorthodox, though it did allow the Museum to enlarge its collection greatly without expending much of its own funds.<sup>34</sup>

Once the instruments were at the Museum, however, Brown rarely saw them and did not involve herself with their day-to-day display, preservation, or any curatorial functions other than acquisitions and later, some assistance with cataloguing. In the very early years she set out a general plan for the arrangement of all of the Museum's musical instruments, including the Drexel collection and other gifts and purchases by the Museum, and then left it to Cesnola to make everything, from cases to labels, happen.<sup>35</sup> On one early occasion she also toured the other galleries in the Museum, noted objects that resembled musical instruments, and informed

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<sup>31</sup> *Bulletin*, New Series, Vol. 12, No. 1, Summer 1953, 12.

<sup>32</sup> See, e.g., Winifred Howe, *A History of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Vol. 1, 1946)*, 219.

<sup>33</sup> See Howe, 218–19.

<sup>34</sup> During these first years after the 1889 Brown donation, Museum staff largely responded to Brown donations rather than initiating actions relating to the instruments. The letter of August 11, 1899, by Luigi Roversi (variously described as Cesnola's secretary and as assistant curator) to Brown is typical: at her request, the Museum has offered a Florentine dealer 5,000 lire for "the old piano."

<sup>35</sup> By 1895, besides the Drexel and Brown gifts, several other people had donated pianos, and the Museum had purchased a handful of instruments. The Museum's guidebooks of the day were careful to identify the musical instrument galleries as containing not only the Drexel and Crosby Brown collections, but also "instruments presented by Mrs. R. LaDew and R. Betancourt" and one "lent by Bayard Smith." See, for example, the 1906 Guidebook.

Cesnola that those items belonged in "her" rooms.<sup>36</sup> During the first few years after her 1889 donation, she occasionally visited the Museum, and between visits she chivvied Cesnola along ceaselessly: "I hope you are progressing well with the arrangement of the instruments and I hope to be able to go up to the museum soon again . . ."<sup>37</sup> At the time, this arrangement gave her the control she deemed essential, and gave the Museum a handsome collection at minimal cost for staff or acquisitions, but it resulted in a unit very much outside the mainstream of Museum administration—one which, as will be seen, was easy for the Museum to marginalize later.

After the mid-1890s, Brown herself almost never visited the Museum—in September 1898 she wrote to Cesnola that she had been ill for a year and a half, and it would be "a long time before I am able to visit [the Museum]." She conferred with respect to acquisitions by correspondence—as on January 14, 1903, when she wrote to ask Cesnola to close the room of African and American instruments "for a while" to enable "some few changes" to be made in it. But during this time, she was able to continue her influence at the Museum thanks to another great character in the Department's history, Frances Morris.

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<sup>36</sup> Letter, to Cesnola, requesting the transfer of objects elsewhere in the Museum to "my rooms . . . where they really belong," January 14, 1903.

<sup>37</sup> Letter, Brown to Cesnola, July 6, 1894.



### A Curator for the Collection: Frances Morris

By 1896 the Brown collection at the Museum had grown to 1,200 instruments. The Museum building was three times the size that it had been at the time of the original Brown gift, and the other Museum collections were growing as well. Cesnola and the professional Museum staff had a lot to do besides administer the Brown collection, and the Browns were beginning to experience occasional "pushback" in response to requests for their time and attention. Frances Morris was the answer—on site at the Museum, "to take charge of this large collection."



*Frances Morris (right) in the textile study room, 1918.*

Morris, a native New Yorker, aged 30, was secretary to the Browns' acquaintance and famous anti-Tammany Hall crusader, the Rev. Charles B. Parkhurst. She also did freelance administrative/secretarial work for Mrs. Brown. When she began work at the Museum in 1896, she was the first professional woman employee; she remained the only one for several years (there were also nonprofessional women attendants, called matrons).<sup>38</sup> Her salary of \$1 per hour

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<sup>38</sup> Book of the Ladies Lunch Club, MMA Archives. Perhaps because the Browns initially underwrote her salary, Miss Morris does not appear on the Museum payroll records until 1902, but copious correspondence makes it clear that she was working regularly, though not full time, at the Museum by 1896. She sent her statements for the two days a week that she worked at the Museum by 1898 directly to Cesnola for payment. Her office was a top-story room previously used by Prof. Bashford Dean, storied

was initially underwritten by the Browns, and she spent one full day a week at the Museum. She subsequently appeared on the payroll as "Assistant, Department of Musical Instruments" (though of course there was no such department). Mary Elizabeth Brown then decided that the Museum should hire Morris full time, and so informed Cesnola.<sup>39</sup> By October 1905, Morris was employed 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9:00 to 4:00 p.m. Saturday at a salary "not to exceed" \$1,200 per year, but Brown continued to take an interest in Morris's employment, as when she wrote to Cesnola to say that Morris should take charge of the Museum's lace collection.<sup>40</sup> Morris organized the Museum Employees' Association in 1905, as well as the Ladies Lunch Club, which for several decades invited distinguished gentlemen as well as ladies for luncheons at the Museum with the female professional staff.

As a Museum employee, Morris was part of the department to which the musical instruments belonged—initially, Professor Hall's Sculpture department, and, beginning in 1907, the newly created Department of Decorative Arts. The wide range of her duties in the early years is illustrative of the informal way the Museum worked then (and may also be the result of her gender)—she was, for example, responsible for the Christmas decorations for the Museum director's office. But from the beginning she was a pioneer for women employees: starting modestly with a request to John Crosby Brown, in his capacity as a trustee, to get a couple of basement rooms cleaned and painted for the use of the then nine women staff members.<sup>41</sup> Gradually her position became more professional, and she was promoted to a formal curatorial position in 1910. By 1914 the *New York Times* described her as "the needlework expert of the Museum" and also the "curator of the [Musical Instruments] department [who] arranged the permanent collection exhibit."<sup>42</sup>

For the whole of her thirty-three years at the Museum, Morris handled all aspects of the daily operations of the Collection, and all of the correspondence. She was also the public face of the Department, gave lectures and tours, broadcast (once radio became part of the Museum's outreach), traveled to other musical instrument collections—both abroad and domestically—and published articles about the instruments.<sup>43</sup> After the 1890s Brown's rate of collecting diminished and her visits to the Museum all but ceased. Thereafter, Morris exercised almost total control over the musical instruments at the Museum, and by 1907 had also been put in charge of the Museum's textiles; she became the official "keeper" of the Museum's lace and textile study rooms when the first such room opened in 1909, a respected textile scholar, and author of numerous scholarly articles on middle eastern carpets, lace, and the range of other textiles at the

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founder of the Arms and Armor collection, and it became the gathering place for all of the Museum's professional women (six, by 1907).

<sup>39</sup> Letter, Brown to Cesnola, June 14, 1898.

<sup>40</sup> Letters, Brown to Edward Robinson (Museum Assistant Director, 1905–10; Director, 1910–31), June 4, 1906; Museum Secretary to Frances Morris, October 7, 1905.

<sup>41</sup> Letter, Morris to Brown, September 19, 1906.

<sup>42</sup> *New York Times*, August 8 and 10, 1914.

<sup>43</sup> See, e.g., *New York Times*, June 18, 1905; *New York Times*, October 29, 1905; see also *Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 1; *Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 12, December 1911, 229–231 ("A Gift of Musical Instruments" by Frances Morris); see also lectures, January 10, 1920, "The History of the Orchestra." Morris also lectured outside the Museum; see, for example, letters to and from Frank Damrosch, Institute of Musical Art, about getting players to accompany her 1906 lectures on "The Evolution of the Modern Orchestra."

Museum.<sup>44</sup> While she remained in charge of the musical instruments for her entire time at the Museum, from about 1910 on Morris spent a larger proportion of her time in her textile role, and published almost exclusively on textiles rather than instruments, although she continued to lecture extensively on instruments also. She did not have professional degrees or musical training, as far as is known, but she became highly knowledgeable and respected in both the textile and musical instrument fields.<sup>45</sup> She traveled widely to further her expertise, and was an unusual and accomplished figure in the museum world of the 1910s and 1920s.

But even after Morris's arrival, when the Museum was offered a donation of a musical instrument, or an opportunity to buy one, the process of consulting Brown with respect to accessions was observed until Brown's health declined. In most cases it was Morris who actually viewed an instrument on offer, and she always wrote the report to the trustees, but the recommendation to acquire or decline the object was presented to the trustees as Brown's.<sup>46</sup> Increasingly, however, Morris guided the decisions: She wrote to Brown in 1906, after Brown refused to pay for an instrument offered to the Museum, that in her [Morris's] opinion the Museum needed that particular instrument and that she was recommending its purchase.

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<sup>44</sup> Letter, Morris to John Crosby Brown, November 1, 1907; see *Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 10 (October 1929), 266; see also e.g. Arthur Dilley *Oriental Rugs and Carpets* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; 1931) at viii (citing Morris as an expert).

<sup>45</sup> *New York Times*, February 1913. It does not appear that Morris was a trained or frequent musical performer, though this *New York Times* account of one of her lectures for the blind mentions that she "gave a small solo on the big kettle drum."

<sup>46</sup> For example, in early 1906, George Lowther met with Morris about donating a Nunns and Clark rosewood piano shown 1851 at the Crystal Palace exhibition in London, where it had received a first prize. On March 12, Morris advised Henry Watson Kent (Museum Assistant Secretary, 1905–1913; Secretary, 1913–1940) that "Mrs. Brown is in favor of accepting the piano." The piano (06.1312) was accepted (*Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 7), and Morris subsequently spent time trying to track down the medals it won, to exhibit with the instrument.

## Displaying the Collection



*Gallery C-37 (formerly C-27), second floor, 1913. The action models on the floor are being dismantled to be moved to the first floor.*

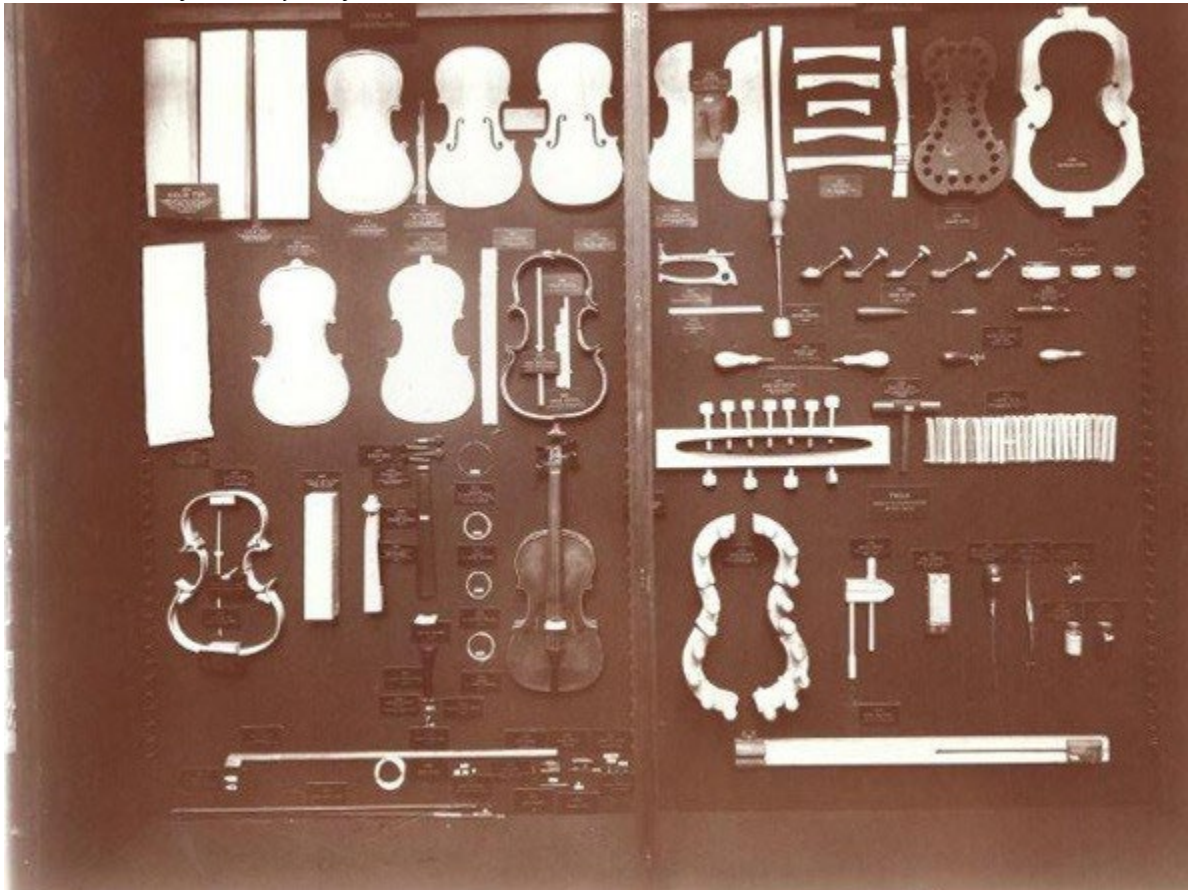
Early correspondence shows that the Museum wanted to make the instrument collection useful to the ordinary viewer as well as the scholar. Indeed, the instrument galleries became educational spaces that were in many ways far ahead of their time.<sup>47</sup> One of Prof. Hall's early letters to Brown notes: "You may not be aware that the collection is studied not a little by writers and illustrators. . . . The portion of the [collection] that is already on exhibition has provided such a

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<sup>47</sup> Mary Elizabeth Brown, 1903 catalogue, *Vol. II, Asia*, 8: "In the choice of . . . specimens, the educational purpose has been paramount . . . no instrument has been chosen for its beauty alone, nor has historical association been a determining consideration. . . . The specimen has won its right to a place because illustrating some step in the development of music. No special effort has been made to secure the works of famous masters. The collector has no sympathy with the practice of locking up in museums instruments noted for rare beauty of tone. In a few cases . . . it may be important to secure single specimens in order to illustrate some principle . . . thus it is greatly to be hoped that the collection may ultimately contain examples of the workmanship of the great Italian violin makers. But in general, a Stradivarius or an Amati is too precious to be condemned to a monastic existence."

benefit to students and workers."<sup>48</sup> Brown clearly took this information seriously, and as a result of Prof. Hall's suggestion, she sought out more didactic materials including models, photographs, and replicas to be included with the instrument displays; after Morris arrived at the Museum in 1896, she continued this work. The photograph collection, in particular, became and remains an exceptionally valuable resource for those interested in seeing how instruments were used in their native lands in the late nineteenth century. Until she left the Museum in 1929, Morris continued to seek out and acquire "historical" photographs of instruments in use; some of these were independently accessioned by the Museum.

*Double case showing the Construction of a Violin Body, with luthier's tools, as installed on the eastern wall of Gallery 39 from 1903–13.*



There were five arrangements of the musical instruments between 1889 and 1903. When Brown made her first gift, the Drexel instruments were on display in the “western pavilion” of the Museum. She immediately charged Cesnola with adding her 266 donated items to the Drexel display, thus, as the *Progress* newspaper (23 Feb. 1889) “forming the most complete representation of musical instruments in the world.” In anticipation of an official opening

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<sup>48</sup> Letter, December 28, 1893.

reception in October 1889, she also continued adding items to the collection.<sup>49</sup> Thus on October 26, 1889—two days before the Museum opening party—she wrote to Cesnola: "[We] thought you would like to have our set of Indian instruments for the opening of the museum . . . [I] write immediately to ask you to send a waggon [sic] out to Orange for them . . ." Later the same day: "I am going to send with the Indian instruments an old Italian spinet. The instruments are light, a one horse wagon can move them . . ." Cesnola was responsible for ensuring that the display was rearranged thirty-six hours before the opening to accommodate an extra harpsichord plus about thirty instruments from the subcontinent.<sup>50</sup> Though the addition of three hundred new art objects to the display in a single gallery in the space of a few weeks is not one which today's curators, conservators, and designers would contemplate with equanimity, the opening party took place on time. From this time forward, all of the Museum's musical instruments were displayed together, although Museum publications continued to identify the Drexel collection, and later the Boekelman keyboard collection, separately.<sup>51</sup>

Although no photographs are known to survive, this first display (on the ground floor of the museum, on the park side "adjoining the Cesnola collection of Cypriote glass"<sup>52</sup> seems to have been organized insofar as possible consistently with the 1888 catalogue prepared by William Adams Brown, with instruments grouped by country or region, starting with China, followed by "Japan and Corea" and so on. As the collection grew, moved into different spaces, and eventually was catalogued in the early twentieth century, a systematic system of classification was implemented, and the displays were arranged accordingly, but interestingly, the basic ordering of the catalogues and the collecting did not deviate much from the first exposition in William Adams Brown's catalogue.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> "New York's Art Museum," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, December 1889, XXVIII, No. 6, 663; *Catalogue of the Crosby Brown Collection*, 1903, 3–4. As the Brown collection at the Museum expanded during the early years from part of one room to all of five rooms, each new gallery opening was celebrated at one of the Museum's seasonal parties, which had the glamor of today's Costume Institute Ball. Whenever there was a "new" instrument gallery featured at one of these parties, Brown took an interest in each party detail, down to boutonnières from her greenhouses for the Museum staff in attendance.

<sup>50</sup> The Indian instruments were the group sent as a gift in 1888 to Brown Brothers by Raja Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore, specifically for the purpose of supplementing the collection then being catalogued by William Adams Brown. They arrived just too late to be illustrated in the catalogue (the catalogue did include a comprehensive discussion of Indian music and Indian instruments based on Tagore's books, which he had sent earlier to William Adams Brown) but, as set forth above, they were included in the Museum's first display of the Brown collection in 1889. William Adams Brown, *Musical Instruments and Their Homes* (New York: 1888), 106.

<sup>51</sup> See, e.g., pamphlet guide published 1915, *What the Metropolitan Museum is Doing*.

<sup>52</sup> *Music Trades*, August 9, 1913; see also floor plan published in "New York's Art Museum," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, December 1889, XXVIII, No. 6, 664.

<sup>53</sup> The major difference between the layout of the 1888 catalogue and the 1901-1914 series of catalogues is that in the former, European instruments appear last, and in the latter, they appear second, after Asian instruments. At this time and until 1905, the Museum had no official accession numbering system. Museum records of the Brown donations during the 1890s make it clear that there was no official Museum inventory or number assigned as instruments arrived;

After the first display opened, Brown focused on expanding the collection. She interpreted the terms of her gift—and the Museum accepted her interpretation—to mean that she could choose to buy, directly or indirectly, any new instrument she wanted to for the Museum. She was not obligated to make any particular purchase, and of course the Museum was free to make any purchase it wanted to without involving her. But she paid for most of the instruments that came into the Museum's collection between 1890 and 1915, whether she had located them or whether they had been offered to the Museum by others. Generally instruments were invoiced by and shipped to the Museum, which paid for them and then issued cash receipts for the funds Brown provided to repay the Museum. Generally the Museum negotiated purchases (Brown appears to have felt, probably rightly, that a museum would get better prices and fairer deals than a private buyer), arranged for transport, retrieved cases from customs, and the like. Personally and through her numerous secretaries, Brown peppered Cesnola with correspondence—sometimes three and four letters in a day—informing him of instruments on their way, instruments he needed to collect at the docks, invoices he needed to pay before she reimbursed him, people he needed to write to, and innumerable other details. Instruments poured into the Museum by the dozen. In the first five years, she almost tripled the size of the collection, and then kept going; on June 17, 1898, for instance, she wrote to Cesnola: "I find more and more that intelligent people are interested in the study of musical instruments, and it is an immense study."<sup>54</sup> The same week she notified Cesnola happily that she had acquired over two hundred more instruments for the Museum.

The 1889 instrument display used all available space, and for five years thereafter, all new instrument acquisitions were stored in the basement, pending completion of the Museum's second addition. Wing C opened to the public on November 5, 1894, with sixteen galleries on

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indeed, Brown often shipped instruments by the boxload directly to Professor Hall, who notified Cesnola by brief memorandum of the arrival of, say, "48 instruments." At the time of the second Museum instrument display in 1894, Museum Registrar Patrick Reynolds compiled for Hall a now-vanished 526-card catalogue of the instruments donated by Brown between 1889 and 1894. The card catalogue cross-referenced the "present temporary number, first Museum number, and Brown's catalogue number [the illustration numbers from the 1888 catalogue of the original 278 instrument donation before approaching the Museum]" of each instrument. It is not known how, if at all these numbering systems relate to the present instrument numbers, which, as set forth *infra*, were assigned beginning in 1896.

<sup>54</sup> Executive Committee Minutes, Vol. 4, 228. After Brown made a donation and the Museum learned about it from Prof. Hall, the Executive Committee of the trustees would officially accept the donation. Minutes of the Executive Committee and trustee meetings reflect a constant series of these acceptances, with suitable—though perhaps diminishing—expressions of gratitude. (The Museum never rejected any Brown donation, though even at that early date the Museum did not accept all gifts). The Minutes rarely identify the instruments donated: for example, the October 30, 1894, Executive Committee minutes approved the acquisition of "about 70" more instruments, on top of 165 accepted a few weeks earlier. Needless to say, these rather casual and imprecise records of official acquisition decisions mean that, to this day, the Museum does not know exactly what instruments came to the Museum on what dates before about 1906.

the second floor and six larger halls on the first floor.<sup>55</sup> Needless to say, it included suitable space for the growing Crosby Brown Collection: two rooms, C-27 and C-28, on the second floor.<sup>56</sup> In December 1893, with the construction well underway, Brown personally toured the site and wrote to Cesnola: "I am very glad to have seen the future home of the instruments for I am very interested in them."<sup>57</sup> The instrument galleries were completed and installed on time, with Cesnola again responsible for the arrangement, though he complained that the Museum's generous new labor practices had greatly increased the expense of this installation as compared to earlier ones.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *New York Times*, October 29, 1894, 12. Many instruments were shipped to the Museum in pieces, and since many were quite unfamiliar to most westerners, those unpacking them would not have known whether three gourds, for example, made up one instrument, or constituted three separate ones. This factor probably accounts for some discrepancies in counting the number of donations during this era.

<sup>56</sup> *Music Trades*, August 9, 1913; see also "*Preliminary Catalogue*" *Handbook 13, No. 1, Gallery 27* (1901), 6. Originally these galleries were numbered 15 and 17.

<sup>57</sup> See, e.g., Minutes of the Trustees Committee on Arrangements and Installations, November 11, 1893, and January 27, 1894, discussing the assignment of rooms for the Crosby Brown Collection; letter, Brown, December 5, 1893.

<sup>58</sup> *Report of the Director on the Probability Cost of Installing the Collections in the New North Addition*, May 15, 1893. Before 1894 Museum employees worked seven days a week and the non-professional staff were required to be skilled in a relevant trade, such as plastering. (Though the normal factory and laborer's work week was six days, the Museum was not required to follow suit.) In 1894 the trustees' "generosity" caused them to grant "one day in each week to themselves" for all employees from "Curators to the door-boys." With the employees working only six days and two evenings a week, the Museum for the first time had to pay "city wages" for installation help.



*The invitation to the opening reception for the first Wing C Musical Instruments galleries, on the second floor.*<sup>59</sup>

MRS. JOHN CROSBY BROWN,

One hundred and thirty-four Musical Instruments, to be added to the collections heretofore presented by her.

Special mention is made of the following :

Mrs. John Crosby Brown has increased largely her gift of musical instruments, and the collection will soon be unrivaled.

**Metropolitan Museum of Art,**

CENTRAL PARK.

## Order of Ceremonies

AT THE OPENING OF THE

NEW NORTH WING OF THE MUSEUM,



On Monday, November the 5th,

1894,

AT TWO O'CLOCK P. M.

The new galleries held over six hundred instruments, but by the time the display opened, there were another fifty in storage, and within two years the size of the collection had doubled again.<sup>60</sup> In 1896 Cesnola arranged to build a second layer of cases around the walls of the two instrument galleries, which allowed the rooms to accommodate 1,200 instruments, though it created an extraordinarily dense "two-story" display which was continued into each new gallery that was

<sup>59</sup> For this party Cesnola printed a few dozen invitations and asked Brown if she would like to send them out to friends. Some fifteen letters to Cesnola later, Brown finished identifying for him the friends she wanted to invite—a number well in excess of her contemporary Mrs. Astor's famous four hundred.

<sup>60</sup> *Music Trades*, August 9, 1913.

added for the Collection and which persisted into the 1950s.<sup>61</sup> The opening party for this renovation celebrated two of Brown's most notable acquisitions: the glass harmonium,<sup>62</sup> then known as a Franklin harmonica (89.4.1211), and the 1720 Cristofori piano (89.4.1219), at this time one of only two known Cristofori pianos.<sup>63</sup> The latter, signed by the maker, was sold to Brown as the second piano ever made by Cristofori, and turned out to be the world's earliest surviving piano.



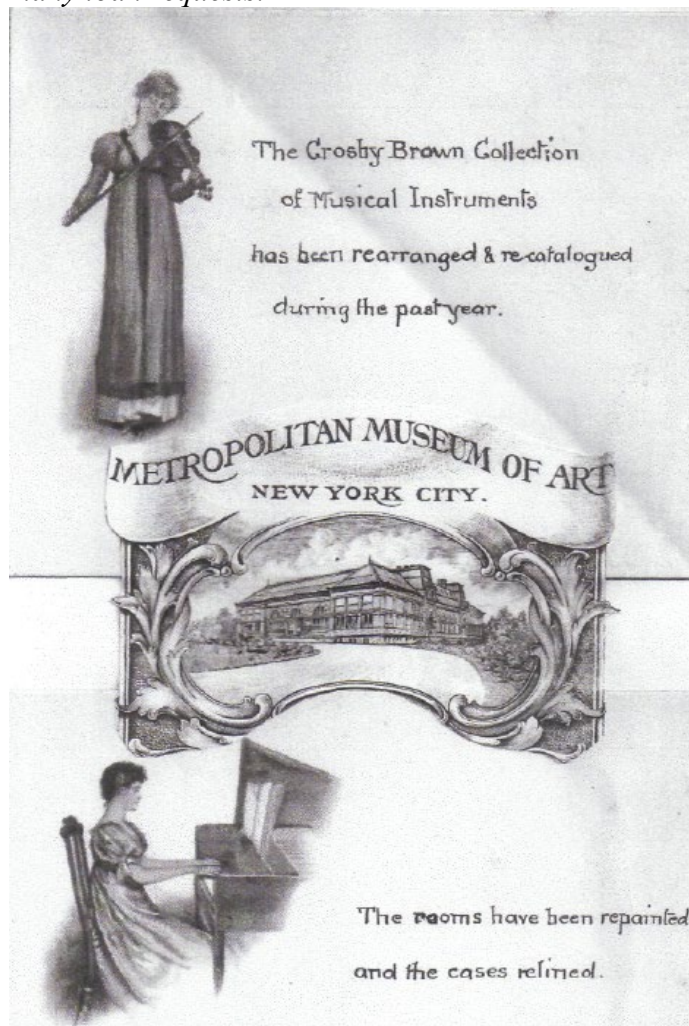
*Glass harmonica, 18th century. Possibly Germany. Wood, glass, various materials. The*

<sup>61</sup> *New York Tribune*; *New York Evening Post*; *New York Independent*, May 1–3, 11 1896; see also "Preliminary Catalogue" Handbook 13, No. 1, Gallery 27, 1901, 6.

<sup>62</sup> *New York Tribune*, May 3, 1896; *Art Interchange*, May 1896. Benjamin Franklin invented what is now called the "glass armonica" in 1761, while serving as Pennsylvania's colonial agent in London. The sound is produced by the friction of fingers rubbing the rims of moistened overlapping bowls affixed to a rotating pedal-driven rod that is suspended within a water filled trough. When she was unable to find a "real" one, Brown planned to have a replica made—she was always happy to have a replica when she could not get an original—but she eventually was able to buy this authentic example in Germany.

<sup>63</sup> Brown bought it in 1896 from the Martello family in Florence, which had bought it in about 1820 at a public sale by the Grand Duke of Siena of disused items from his palace.

*Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.1211). Franklin's innovations were nesting the glass bowls and mounting them on a spindle, and the foot pedal at right to rotate the spindle. The instrument's popular appeal led to many loan requests.<sup>64</sup>*



*Invitation to the opening reception for the 1896 gallery rearrangement.*

By 1898 Brown's collecting had again outstripped the existing gallery space, and Cesnola assigned a third adjacent room, C-26, to the instruments. Frances Morris took charge of the entire rearrangement of the existing rooms of the collection much easier, but Brown was determined to make the new arrangement complete, and her correspondence with Cesnola grew more voluminous as the opening date approached and she acquired new instruments to fill in the gaps. Eventually, after strenuous efforts by Brown to delay all preparatory work until the eleventh hour so as to permit her to buy yet more instruments for the new room, the beleaguered Museum registrar, Patrick H. Reynolds, and Cesnola riposted: "It is now the fifth week that I am giving my whole time to the rearrangement of your musical instruments . . . you must not forget

<sup>64</sup> See e.g., Letter, Herbert Winlock (Museum Director, 1932–39) to Ernest LaPrade, January 11, 1936, responding to a request for the loan of the armonium on to be played on NBC Radio.

that I have twenty-eight other collections, each of which demands the same amount of care from me as yours . . . I hope that you will be convinced that I am doing my very best to satisfy you."<sup>65</sup> His efforts paid off: Gallery 26 for Europe, Gallery 27 for Asia, and Gallery 28 for Africa, America, and Oceania all opened (or reopened) on time in 1899.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the musical instruments collection numbered over two thousand objects—almost ten times the original number. (Musical instrument donations from 1884-1904 totalled about 3500, an average of 175 per year, about five times more than paintings donations during those years) The collection occupied four rooms, about ten percent of the total number of Museum galleries, and some people worried that the growth would soon outstrip available space: on September 24, 1900, Museum President Henry Marquand wrote to Cesnola ". . . regarding the musical collection of Mrs. Brown. If we add much more it will overshadow all departments—this should be set forth to the Board . . . Mrs. Brown should be informed of the view of some of the officers as to limits."<sup>66</sup> One of the trustees consulted, the same William Dodge who had introduced Joseph Drexel to the Museum twenty years earlier, wrote soothingly to Cesnola on September 28: "I hope it will not be necessary to do anything to check Mrs. Brown's enthusiasm—it cannot go on much further as the field is almost exhausted." Nothing was done to "check Mrs. Brown," but she soon proved that the field was far from exhausted.

Thus she asked for a fourth gallery, which Cesnola handed over in 1901 with barely a protest, perhaps because another large addition to the Museum was set to open in 1902. The new gallery, C-25,<sup>67</sup> opened on May 9, 1901, and was devoted to brass instruments, the principal focus of Brown's collecting efforts since the 1899 gallery rearrangement. Brown instructed Cesnola to forbid photography, so as to preserve the exclusivity of the opening party. One press account remarked that the new room brought the number of instruments in the collection to 2,200, and suggested optimistically that it "practically completes the work" Brown had begun in 1889 with her first gift.<sup>68</sup> A fifth and final adjoining gallery was assigned to Brown in 1903. Over the next seventy years, the instruments moved from place to place within the Museum, but the area

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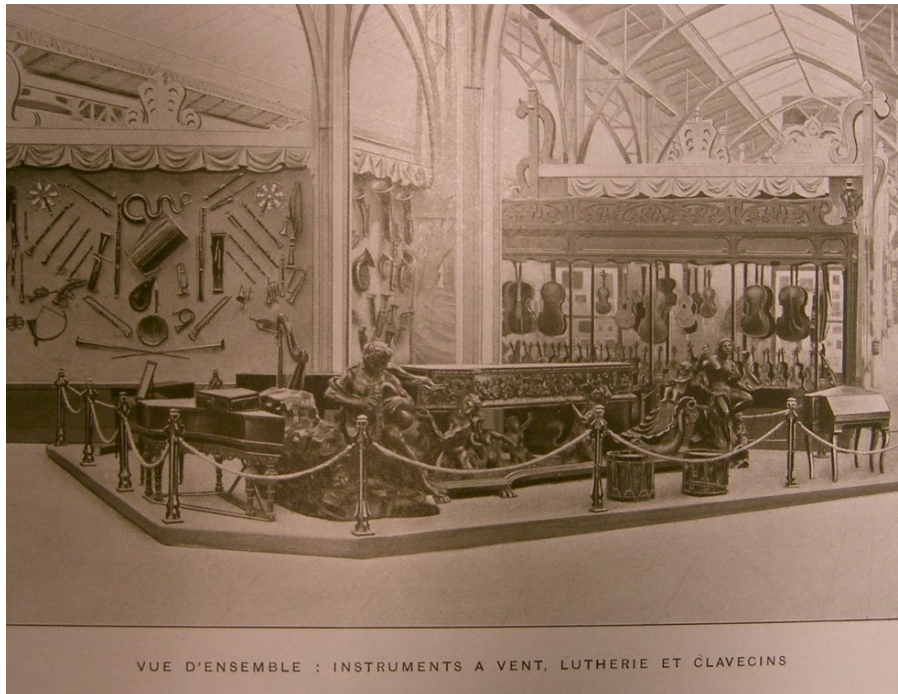
<sup>65</sup> Letter, Cesnola to Brown, February 6, 1899.

<sup>66</sup> See *New Yorker*, March 23, 1940: "The Brown barrage [of donations], long greeted by cries of official enthusiasm, presently began to pall on the trustees."

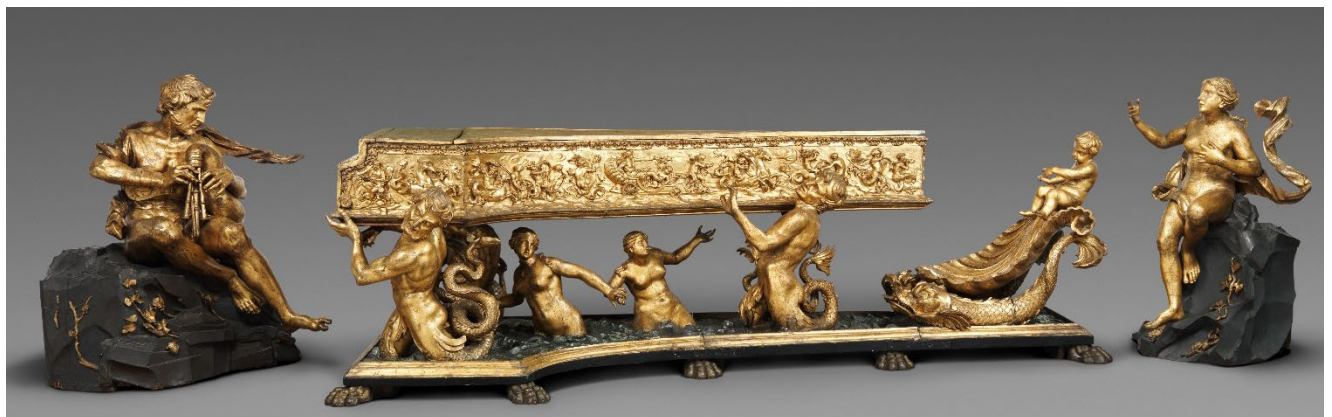
<sup>67</sup> After the new wing opened in 1902, the upstairs C galleries were renumbered, and C-25–29 became C-35–39. Thus the 1903 keyboard catalogue refers to galleries 25, 26, etc., where the 1904 *Musicians' Portraits* catalogue notes the number change and refers to the same galleries as 35, 36, etc. Signs in the galleries indicated the old gallery numbers as well as the new ones, so that visitors could use the catalogues printed before the renumbering. By an unfortunate chance, the Museum also assigned the designations C-26–29 to the Collection's first-floor rooms beginning in 1914; these were on the western, or Central Park, wall of Wing C, and were thus called the "Parkside galleries." The second-floor galleries C-26–29 also continued to have these numbers, so Museum references between 1914 and 1933 to galleries C 26–29 are confusing. All references in Museum publications to galleries C26-29 after 1933 are to the upstairs galleries; the Parkside musical instruments galleries disappear from Museum directories and guides at that time, though they were occupied by instruments until 1950 and used for teaching and demonstrations throughout the 1940s.

<sup>68</sup> *New York Independent*, May 23, 1901.

available to the Department for public exhibitions has not increased since 1903.<sup>69</sup> When a new piece such as the baroque harpsichord by Todini (89.4.2929)—sometimes called the "Golden Harpsichord"—arrived, the galleries were simply rearranged to make space for the additions.



*The Todini on display for sale in Paris, 1900, before it was purchased by Mary Elizabeth Brown's brother.*



*Michele Todini's "Golden Harpsichord." Brown's brother saw it in Paris in 1901, and wrote to*

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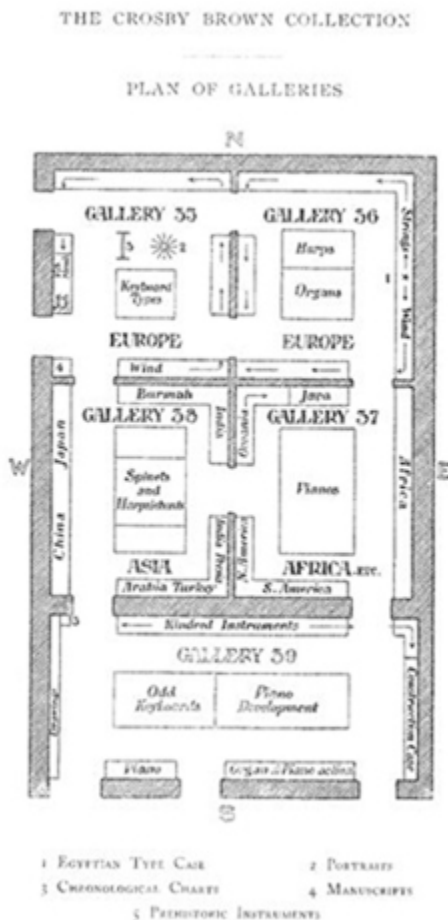
<sup>69</sup> These galleries measured approximately 6,200 square feet; and in 1914, when the instruments moved to the first floor, the new space was identical in square footage. In 1942 the new Wing F instrument galleries added about 3,000 square feet, for a total of just over 9,000 square feet. When all of those galleries closed in the early 1950s, the Department display space was minimal, or nonexistent, until the opening of the current galleries with approximately 8,000 square feet.

*her: "A most wonderful . . . harpsichord . . . upheld by life-size figures of tritons and mermaids . . . it is impossible for me to adequately describe it in words."<sup>70</sup>*

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<sup>70</sup> Letter, March 19, 1901. The price was 22,500 francs, or approximately \$4,250.

## Contributors to the Collection (1880s–1930s)



## GUIDE TO THE COLLECTION

### GALLERY 55.

#### INSTRUMENTS OF THE ORIENT.

West Wall. China, Japan, Corea, Siam.  
North Wall. Burma, India.  
East Wall. India, Asiatic Russia, Persia.  
South Wall. Turkey, Arabia.  
Small Central Cases. Odd Asiatic Instruments.

#### EUROPEAN KEYBOARDS.

Central Case. *Plucked Strings*: Virginals, Spinets, Harpsichords.

### GALLERY 57.

#### INSTRUMENTS OF SAVAGE TRIBES AND SEM-CIVILIZED PEOPLES.

East Wall. Africa.  
North Wall. Java, Oceania.  
West Wall. Oceania, Philippine Islands, North America.  
South Wall. Central and South America.

#### EUROPEAN KEYBOARDS.

Central Case. *Struck Strings*: Clavichords, Pianofortes.

### GALLERY 58.

#### EUROPEAN INSTRUMENTS.

Classified under four heads: STRINGS, WIND, VIBRATING MEMBRANES, SONOROUS SUBSTANCES. To assist the classification, the starting point should be the EGYPTIAN TYPE CASE (Middle Case, East Wall, see Plan of Galleries). The STRINGED INSTRUMENTS are to the left of this case, arranged under the large divisions of that class: *Plucked Strings*: Harps, Lutes, Psalteries. *Struck Strings*: Dulcimer, Keyed Citterns. *Bowed Strings*: Viol, Viola, Violin, Vielle or Hurdy Gurdy. The WIND INSTRUMENTS are to the right of the EGYPTIAN TYPE CASE, arranged under the three heads of that class: *Flutes*—Vertical and Transverse Flutes. *Reeds*: Beating Reeds—Clarinet, Oboe, Bagpipe; Free Reeds—Accordion, Concertina (Central Case and Wall Case 294). The third division, *Cup Mouthpieces*, follows in Gallery 59.

East Wall. EGYPTIAN TYPE CASE. To the left, STRINGED INSTRUMENTS: *Plucked Strings*: Harps, Lutes.  
North Wall. *Plucked Strings*: Mandolines, Guitars, Lyra, Citterns, Psalteries. *Struck Strings*: Dulcimers, Keyed Citterns.

West Wall. *Bowed Strings*: Monochords, Viola, Violins, Vielles or Hurdy Gurdies.

East Wall. EGYPTIAN TYPE CASE. To the right, WIND INSTRUMENTS: *Whistles*; Vertical and Transverse Flutes. *Single Beating Reeds*: Clarinet, Saxophone.

South Wall. *Double Beating Reeds*: Oboes, Bassoons, Krumphorn.

Central Case. *Strings*: Harps. *Wind*: Free Reeds and Organs.

### GALLERY 59.

#### EUROPEAN INSTRUMENTS—Continued.

South Wall. WIND INSTRUMENTS: *Cup Mouthpieces*: Cornetti, Bass Horns, Ophicleides, Alpine Horns.

East Wall. *Cup Mouthpieces*: Roman Bucina, Hunting Horns, French Horns, Russian Horns.

North Wall. Trumpets, Roman Lutes, Trombones, Bagles, Valved Horns, Helicon.

West Wall. VIBRATING MEMBRANES: Drums, Onion Flute, SONOROUS SUBSTANCES: Castanets, Triangle, Bells.

Corner Case. Musical Manuscripts.

*Floor plan of the second-floor Musical Instruments galleries, from a 1905 program printed for the visit of the Music Teacher's National Association to the Collection*

During these years of building and completing the collection, Brown and Morris corresponded widely with people all over the world whom they believed might help to expand the collection or to provide information about what was already in it. A particularly important collaborator was the Rev. Canon Francis W. Galpin, a distinguished British instrument collector and longtime adviser to Brown and Morris. They persuaded Galpin, who was an expert on keyboards and harps in particular, to travel to New York in the fall of 1901 to oversee the European instrument catalogue's preparation, and to supervise the classification of the western instruments.<sup>71</sup> Morris

<sup>71</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (January 1906), 24. Galpin's work is remembered today by the Galpin Society, which promotes the study of musical instruments worldwide. Besides helping with the catalogues, he planned some of the didactic exhibits for the galleries—for example, one which showed the development of musical notation from medieval to modern times.

also spent time in England consulting Galpin on more than one occasion, and he served as a resource for her for as long as she was at the Museum. Henry Balfour, curator of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford from 1885 until the 1930s, was a mine of information on non-Western specimens. At the other end of the scale were, for example, the nephew of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, who sold Brown a Montenegrin *tibia* (hornpipe); a very helpful person she called "my Chinaman," who elucidated the uses of various instruments from the Far East; and an archaeologist from the University of Pennsylvania, who sent instruments he had received from a "witch doctor" in Gabon.

Another distinguished contributor to the collection was Raja Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore, a musicologist, inventor of the system for notating Hindustani music, and scholar and theorist of what he called "Sanskrit" music. Tagore donated approximately thirty instruments from his native Bengal, among them several iconic pieces such as a lute in the form of a peacock (89.4.163); he also donated photographs, including one of his well-known orchestra.<sup>72</sup> Yet another was Alfred J. Hipkins, a self-taught but expert musician and scholar, employed beginning at the age of fourteen by the Broadwood & Sons piano factory in London.<sup>73</sup> William Adams Brown had relied on work by both Tagore and Hipkins in researching and writing the 1888 catalogue of his mother's collection before she donated it to the Museum; indeed, Tagore had provided copies of four of his own works on Hindu music for Brown's use in writing the catalogues.

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<sup>72</sup> One hundred of Tagore's Indian instruments helped to form the Brussels Conservatory a few years before Brown began collecting. Tagore also donated a number of instruments to the Smithsonian.

<sup>73</sup> Hipkins (1826–1903) was a seminal scholar and author in the field of organology. He published widely, particularly on keyboards. His work, *Musical Instruments, Historic, Rare, and Unique*, published in 1888, was used and cited by William Adams Brown in his 1888 catalogue essays, and also relied on by Frances Morris and Mary Elizabeth Brown.





**RAJAH S. M. TAGORE.**

THE RAJAH S. M. TAGORE, whose portrait is given herewith, is a resident of Calcutta, and is specially known for his literary attainments and liberality. His house is the home for all foreigners of distinction visiting the East; and, as may be seen from the list of titles which follow, his position has been recognized by all the governments of Europe. The exhibit, of which a list follows, has been presented to the United States by the Rajah, and will be deposited in the Smithsonian Institution at the close of the Exhibition.

*Sir Sourindro Mohan Tagore, from the catalogue of the 1883 Foreign Exhibition in Boston. Tagore sent fifty musical instruments to Boston, and directed that they be sent to the new Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC after the Exhibition closed.*

Among Morris and Brown's principal correspondents and providers of instruments was Sarah Sagehorn Frishmuth (1842–1926), best known as the subject of Thomas Eakins's famous portrait of her surrounded by musical instruments. Frishmuth's story is in many ways strikingly similar to Brown's. From a successful tobacco manufacturing family, her income and connections, while not equal to the Browns', allowed her to pursue an interest in organology—the scientific and anthropological study of musical instruments—that she developed in middle age. Frishmuth started collecting a few years after Brown, at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Within two years

she had amassed over four hundred pieces, and, like Brown, she also focused on what she called "primitive" instruments. In 1899 she gave her collection, by then numbering more than one thousand objects, to the University of Pennsylvania Museum. In 1902 she began a relationship with another institution, the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, which officially named her as Honorary Curator of the Department of Musical Instruments. For them she acquired several hundred more instruments over the next seventeen years. She fulfilled her curatorial duties of writing articles, giving lectures, and maintaining the collection personally—as distinct from Brown, who relied on Morris and the Museum staff to do that work—but Frishmuth's collection never had a published catalogue, and her more limited means prevented her collections from rivaling Brown's. Frishmuth did, however, correspond with Brown and Morris regularly from about 1899 on; the two ladies negotiated instrument swaps from time to time, and Frishmuth at times acted almost as an agent for Brown—she was responsible for obtaining about seventy-five instruments in Brown's collection, a few by outright gift—for example, a Mexican bell presented in 1905, 89.4.505; some of which she was commissioned by Brown to obtain—for instance a reed organ, 89.4.2098 “purchased through Mrs. Frishmuth” according to the card catalogue, and some which Frishmuth purchased for herself but subsequently offered for sale to Brown.<sup>74</sup>

Brown had other sources of supply. A generation of missionaries to places from China to Africa was charged with dispatching back to her whatever examples they could find of local musical instruments. The result was a fascinating series of acquisitions: one harp, for example, was "bought by the Rev. Edward Matthews at Kinchassa, Stanley Pool, South Central Africa, [from] one of King Nzulu's slaves . . . [for] seven Ntakos and a handful of cowries" in June 1888.

She employed Brown Brothers' network of foreign banking correspondents and agents for the same purpose. She importuned European and American museums to make photographs for her of items in their collections, and to keep her in mind for acquisitions: the director of the Museum of Natural History hastened to assure Morris in 1905 that "we are constantly looking out for Mrs. Brown, and when we receive material that is new to her collections we shall be very glad to communicate with you."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Memo, Winternitz to Taylor, September 30, 1952, describing his choice of fifteen Frishmuth "pearls" from Philadelphia for the Metropolitan's collection. Sadly for Frishmuth, she lived long enough to know that by 1922 her collection had been removed from display by the University Museum. The non-Western instruments still belong to that institution today, but the Western instruments were dispersed, piecemeal, long ago. The Pennsylvania Museum, which became the Philadelphia Museum, decided in 1933 not to keep an instrument collection, and only two of Frishmuth's pieces remain there. In 1943 most of the collection was lent "permanently" to the Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey, and in 1951 many of the former Frishmuth instruments were given to the University Museum, which, again, kept only the non-Western ones. Emanuel Winternitz selected sixteen of the Western ones when the University Museum deaccessioned them in the early 1950s; these became a gift to the Metropolitan. (Some information on Frishmuth was collected and summarized by Linda Moot for the Crosby Brown Collection Centennial in 1989.)

<sup>75</sup> Letter, Herman C. Bumpus to Morris, December 29, 1905. Morris also worked with the pioneering anthropologist Franz Boas at the American Museum of Natural History.

The Mission Library in New York was an important resource for information and photographs of the tribes and peoples whose instruments she collected. When church sources failed, diplomatic ones were invoked: Her Majesty's consuls throughout the Empire were frequently contacted for information and instruments; the one in Hangchow, China—Walter B. Clennell—obliged by having a set of strings and bridges for a Chinese instrument made and dispatched to Brown.<sup>76</sup>

### **The Exhibition Philosophy**

Brown and Morris believed that the Museum display of instruments needed to encompass all aspects necessary for scholarly and popular understanding. Educational value was the lodestar of Brown's collecting criteria. In the early years of her collecting for the Museum, she commissioned construction models and working models of instrument actions for patrons to touch, so that they could understand, for example, how a hammer hits a key, and, as Morris wrote later, it was a point of pride that "groups of mechanics . . . always gathered about the construction cases on Sunday afternoons . . . [and that] . . . universities use it not only for their classes in the history of music, but as well for . . . physics; archaeologists avail themselves of it."<sup>77</sup> Brown and Morris obtained photographs of instruments from other collections, to display for comparison. The Museum obtained, through Brown and others, portraits and photographs (more than eight hundred of them) of famous musicians to go alongside the types of instruments that they might have played.<sup>78</sup> If Brown could not obtain an instrument she considered important for educational purposes—for instance, an ancient Egyptian instrument—she commissioned and displayed a copy.<sup>79</sup> For unfamiliar instruments, Brown and Morris went to great lengths to obtain clarifying information, including photographs of indigenous people playing them, for inclusion in the instrument cases.<sup>80</sup> These rare photos of native players of Indian, Asian, and African instruments in their original settings, all dating from about 1890 to 1910, are in themselves a great resource for showing how these instruments were used; well-documented ethnographic material from this period is exceedingly rare in the musical arena. Largely as a result of this didactic focus, the original displays of the Museum's musical instrument collection were unusual and imaginative for their time. The keyboard instruments, for example, were shown with a series

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<sup>76</sup> Letter, Clennell to Brown, October 26, 1899.

<sup>77</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 10 (October 1914), 205–06.

<sup>78</sup> From the collection of over 700 musicians' portraits donated by Brown and Mrs. Charles B. Foote, 375 were on display in Gallery 25. The others were in scrapbooks, also in the galleries. *See also* Memo, Assistant Prints Curator Alice Newlin to Kent, 19 April 1938.

<sup>79</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 10 (October 1914), 204–06. Brown's easy acceptance of copies strikes the modern scholar as unprofessional, but was typical of the time: the Metropolitan's largest display during its early years was of plaster reproductions of antique statues and buildings. Brown viewed reproductions as educational tools. For example, on February 14, 1894, Steinway Pianos wrote to Cesnola that Brown had commissioned Steinway to make working models of piano movements, and directed that the models should "stand on the instruments so that the public may see the works as they do at the Kensington Museum [the Victoria and Albert Museum] in London." The models were so successful—so often touched and used by the public—that they had to be repaired in 1906. Brown also commissioned and displayed a copy of Francis I's hunting horn from the Louvre,

<sup>80</sup> *See, e.g.*, letter, Brown to Cesnola, June 18, 1889, directing him to forward a photo of her marimba to the Museum at Oxford, where they were having trouble figuring out how to assemble a marimba.

of drawings ranging from the time of Cristofori (1720) to 1840s America, and a series of "action models" made by Steinway of square, grand, and upright pianos.<sup>81</sup>

Brown's attitude towards collecting, and the Museum displays of her donations, reflected the vogue in the Western world in the post-Darwin nineteenth century for gathering and showing ethnographic material. In many museums, anthropological displays illustrated the world view of the great powers that empire brought the benefits of more developed civilization to less highly evolved societies. The Museum displays also fit in with the trend towards classification and ordering that Darwin used so extensively. They placed a great premium on having "the complete representation of [instrument] families where such are known to exist." Displays of the Crosby Brown collection included thirteen complete instrument family groups.<sup>82</sup>

Brown also shared the contemporary view that instruments should be "playable," although she never suggested or sponsored concerts using her collection. To that end, she arranged for replacement parts to be made whenever possible, perhaps most famously in the case of the Grouwels double spinet she had donated (89.4.1196); for it, in 1895, she commissioned Arnold Dolmetsch, a distinguished musician and instrument-maker in London, to build, for twenty-seven pounds, a replacement for the missing octavino (small removable keyboard at right of the instrument).<sup>83</sup> Dolmetsch may be considered the instigator of the modern historical-performance movement: his early-music concert series over fifteen years beginning in 1890 was "the means of introducing to the public some eight hundred works of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century . . . nearly all previously unknown, unless through the medium of corrupted spoiled modern versions."<sup>84</sup>

Knowledge and understanding of the collection, by both Brown and Morris, became more detailed as the years went on. No detail was too small: one of Brown's missionary suppliers, the Rev. Edward A. Ford, in Gabon, advised that the keys of a marimba are supposed to be "laid across two banana stalks, six to eight feet in length,"<sup>85</sup> so Morris got two banana stalks from the New York Botanical Garden for the marimba exhibit. The two also became more and more

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<sup>81</sup> *New York Times*, April 2, 1905. Some aspects of the early displays were less felicitous: hundreds of instruments had hooks embedded into them to facilitate hanging in cases; the Department has been working on removing these for years.

<sup>82</sup> *Asia* catalogue at 8-9.

<sup>83</sup> Dolmetsch fabricated a beautiful octavino which is still on display with the instrument. His extensive correspondence with Brown shows the care which he used to try to make the octavino operable—getting paper patterns, photographs, etc.—but because he had never seen how the original worked, his replacement lacks the holes necessary for the hammers to reach the octavino from below. Dolmetsch repaired and refurbished old keyboard instruments; by the 1890s he was building what he referred to as "authentic" clavichords and fortepianos, and lecturing on topics like "Music of Shakespeare's Time." (In fact, Dolmetsch's clavichords, harpsichords, and pianos, while based on early instruments, often included modern improvements.) Dolmetsch spent a period of time working for Chickering in Boston, when he met Morris and gave a series of concerts which Morris attended. See, e.g., letters Morris to George Barrere, the flautist, January 19, 1906.

<sup>84</sup> Announcement, April 14, 1901, of the 21<sup>st</sup> season of Dolmetsch concerts in London.

<sup>85</sup> Letter, Edward A. Ford to Morris, December 26, 1905; letter, Morris to New York Botanical Garden, March 26, 1906.

discriminating: on July 31, 1907, Morris returned an inferior clavichord to the seller with the comment "Mrs. Brown is much displeased that you should have sent an instrument . . . not . . . worthy of a place in her collection . . . [it] has been rejected."



*Department Assistant Sofula Novikova demonstrating the Grouwels double virginal, with Dolmetsch's replacement octavina at right, in the late 1940s.*

Educators were also encouraged to use the instruments: for example, a Barnard College physics class in 1912 held a "special courses of study" in the galleries.<sup>86</sup> Frequent public lectures beginning no later than 1905, given by Morris and others, used the instruments for demonstration. There were even special lectures for the blind beginning in 1913, given by Morris and using braille cards as well as the instruments: much of the Museum's collection was not accessible to the blind, and the Department was at the forefront of efforts to make the Museum's art objects available to the disabled. In the 1940s this educational mission of the Collection was taken up and greatly expanded, as will be seen.

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<sup>86</sup> Report of Decorative Arts curator William Valentiner for the year 1912.

## Cataloguing the Collection, 1901–14

During the 1890s Brown's focus was on making her collection comprehensive. After the turn of the century, with the assemblage nearing completion, she decided that the collection should be catalogued. This is perhaps the area in which she personally worked hardest: although Morris researched and traveled widely in connection with the catalogues, Brown herself, as well as John Crosby Brown and their son William Adams Brown, worked tirelessly on them.<sup>87</sup>

The publication of scholarly art catalogues was not then widespread, and even at the Museum few areas had extensively photographed<sup>88</sup> collection catalogues with professional notes on the accessioned objects. Yet Brown never dreamt of doing anything other than a complete and accurate job: as early as 1893 she urged Cesnola to have Professor Hall send her son William Adams Brown a list of the instruments so that the latter could begin making notes on each one, for a catalogue, and in 1898 she wrote that "a catalogue we must have even if it takes us a long time to accomplish it."<sup>89</sup> Where her own expertise was lacking, she enlisted the assistance of the foremost experts, here and in other countries. The result was a valuable set of volumes—in constant demand during the fifty years it was out of print, and again today an oft-cited resource. (The volumes are all in the public domain, and are available in various scanned and photo-reproduced formats online.)

The first major challenge was finding an organizational approach that worked for the entire collection. In the late nineteenth century, European instruments had been studied and classified scientifically, but these classifications had not been applied to instruments from places like southern Asia or sub-Saharan Africa—these were commonly installed as purely ethnographical displays by location. Brown, who described the two then-prevailing systems of classification as “the geographical and the genetic”<sup>90</sup> sought a way to bring coherence to the miscellany she had assembled. By her own account, she used the geographical system to arrange all non-European instruments, and from the beginning, for the European instruments, she used what she described as a “more scientific” system, originally designed by Canon Galpin for an International Music Exhibition held in 1900 at London’s Crystal Palace. Over time this system devised for the

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<sup>87</sup> An interesting question in the history of the Crosby Brown collection is the extent of the contributions of William Adams Brown. He researched and wrote the very thorough essays on both music and musical instruments of many places and times for the 1888 catalogue. His involvement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century catalogues published by the Museum seems to have been less, though the catalogue introductions published under his mother’s name acknowledged that he had “seen the book through the press,” and he is known to have corrected the galley proofs of the keyboard catalogue in 1902.

<sup>88</sup> The Museum had a staff photographer, Charles Balliard, from 1894 on, and organized its Photography Studio in 1906, when it began the systematic cataloguing and photographing of accessions. Immediately, Museum photos of the musical instrument collection began to be available to scholars and anyone interested, by mail or at the Museum, in sizes from 8 x 10 in. to 18 x 22 in., for prices from forty cents to three dollars. *Bulletin*, Vol. 1 No. 2. These prices were high—catalogues of more than two hundred pages, illustrated—like those of the musical instruments collection, sold for less than a dollar.

<sup>89</sup> Letter, Brown to Cesnola, June 17, 1898.

<sup>90</sup> European Catalogue, 1902, at xviii.

European instruments was applied across the Collection, to the furthest extent possible.<sup>91</sup>



*Second-floor gallery C-36, labeled "Musical Instruments of All Nations," on May 28, 1907. Keyboards and harps are in the center cases, with Western stringed instruments on the right wall and woodwinds at rear. While the Brown-era multitiered display appears cluttered to contemporary eyes, it was the fashion, and also reflected the then-current scholarly approach of documenting the evolution of material culture. In the Museum's Old Masters gallery, A-11 (shown below in 1908), displays were similarly dense.*



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<sup>91</sup> Letter, John Crosby Brown to Museum Director Clarke, February 8, 1909. The first (1901) Museum catalogue volume predated the completion of the instrument classification system, and Mr. Brown soon acknowledged that "there ought also to be a rearrangement and a new catalogue of the Chinese and Japanese instruments—the first part of the collection that was installed—as this was not as carefully and scientifically arranged as the other portions. This should be done by Miss Morris while Mrs. Brown and I still have the health and strength to supervise the work."

The “scientific” approach the Browns relied on had been most elaborately expounded by Victor Charles Mahillon, curator of the Brussels Conservatory of Music Museum, at the time the only other comprehensive museum of musical instruments in the world, and one for which a complete catalogue had been published in French in 1880.<sup>92</sup> Once adopted by Brown, the Brussels-inspired system dictated the physical layout and labeling of the instruments at the Museum, as well as the numbering of the instruments, and ultimately, the organization of the printed catalogues.<sup>93</sup> This system, predecessor to the Hornbostel-Sachs system published in 1914 and

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<sup>92</sup> Paris, Berlin, and Vienna also had large collections, but none of these was truly comprehensive.

<sup>93</sup> The Museum musical instrument catalogues published beginning in 1901 state that the one-to-four digit numbers used in the catalogues to identify the instruments described were assigned in 1896, the year that Morris arrived at the Museum and began maintaining the instrument index (*see, e.g., Asia catalogue at 4*). The assignment of the numbers generally followed the organization of the displays, with Asian instruments numbered sequentially, etc. Once the instrument classification system described above was decided upon, about 1902, the instruments were reorganized for display using the new classification system, and the numbers no longer matched the displays.

These one-to-four digit numbers reflected in the printed catalogues are today sometimes referred to as Department Accession numbers or Original Catalogue numbers to distinguish them from the three-part museum accession numbers assigned museum-wide beginning in 1906. As well as being printed in the catalogues, these numbers were on labels affixed to each instrument on display in these years. It is important to note that original catalogue numbers correlate only roughly, if at all, to acquisition date. These numbers originally reflected how the galleries were organized in 1896. This is why the instrument numbers in the catalogues are not sequential: the catalogues were published several years later, and were organized differently from the 1896 exhibition galleries. One can, however, deduce from the original catalogue numbers for instruments acquired before 1896 when the first numbers were assigned, something about the order of the displays: lower numbers were assigned to Asian instruments, the next sequence to European instruments and the highest numbers, generally, to North American instruments. After the first complete numbering of the collection was completed by instrument family in 1896, new acquisition were given new numbers as they arrived, so numbers higher than 1200, (the approximate number of instruments in the collection in 1896), and lower than 3520 (the approximate number of items in the collection in 1906) generally indicate acquisition sometime between 1896 and 1906. The four digit catalogue numbers continued to be assigned by Frances Morris until her departure from the Museum in 1929 and are reflected in a ledger now in the Musical Instruments department; the last number is 3692, for a 1929 acquisition. Morris’s still-extant card file for individual instruments and for her research sources also reflects “original” accession numbers, in many cases.

In 1906 the Museum hired a trained librarian, Margaret Gash, who developed the Museum-wide accession numbering system, wherein the first two digits are the year of accession; the next digit(s) a lot number common to all items formally accessioned by the Museum at one time; the last digit(s) is the item number within the lot. Thus the first two digits normally provide immediate confirmation of the year the Museum acquired an object. Through most of the Museum, Gash saw to it that “correct” accession numbers according to this system were retroactively assigned to identify the year (1870–1906) when the Museum acquired each item in its collection. However, Gash was unable to renumber the musical instruments to reflect the year of acquisition: there were too many of them, and the museum records,



widely used today, grouped all forms of each class of instrument together for a continent—all African versions of the flute, for example. The first gallery arrangements, in 1889 and 1894, did not incorporate this scientific approach, but it was used for all displays beginning with the 1896 gallery rearrangement, until the Winternitz galleries of the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>94</sup> The instruments were labeled individually (*e.g.*, "coach horn") and sometimes by family, (*e.g.*, "family of oboes"), and each label identified the country of origin; but, regardless of country of origin, instruments of a type, like horns, were displayed together. For aesthetic reasons, Morris and Brown displayed objects of a type in size order; thus ranges of flutes and horns from smallest to largest marched across the cases, and in many instances rows of mounted photographs illustrating the instruments ranged along the bottoms of the cases.

This approach was praised by scholars as representing a "definite classification and order from a musical standpoint," and the resulting displays, which included photos of the instruments being

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which rarely included photographs in those years, were not detailed enough to allow her to know which drum or violin arrived in 1889 and which, in 1905.

Thus instead of assigning "correct" accession numbers by year of acquisition, it was decided that the official museum accession numbers for ALL pre-1906 instruments would begin with 89, the year of the first Brown donation, even when there was copious documentation of acquisition in a different year, as for the Todini, sold in Paris in 1901. After the 89, one of two lot numbers was used for all instruments at the Museum at that time: 2, for the Drexel instruments; and 4, for all other acquisitions, whether Crosby Brown donations, Museum purchases, or donations by others. (The last digits in the accession number were, generally, the original catalogue number from Frances Morris's ledger.) As a result of this system, for instruments acquired before 1906, it is impossible to tell from current acquisition numbers, without external documentation, when something came into the Collection, or in which group of things. (For example, the first four instruments Brown bought in 1884 were all part of the first group of 276 instruments donated by Brown in 1889, so one would normally expect all of them to have the same lot number, and each to have a final number between 1 and 276. Yet the four are numbered 89.4.1090, 89.4.1066, 89.4.1214, and 89.4.1081—numbers within the range of European instruments published in the 1902 catalogue.)

Morris herself does not appear ever to have use the new accession number system. For displays, and publications, she relied exclusively on her original catalogue numbers, as reflected in her ledger, and in 1913, she had these original catalogue numbers, not the complete three-part accession numbers, painted in red onto most of the instruments. When Morris published what proved to be the final instrument catalogue, in 1914, she used original catalogue numbers only.

Today, all instruments acquired beginning in 1906 have an accession number that correctly identifies the year of acquisition. (No one has ever attempted a comprehensive pinpointing of the acquisition year of pre-1906 instruments.) However, the accession numbers for dates between 1906 and 1929 when Morris retired are in some cases particularly confusing; after Morris left, many instruments were renumbered, and since the original catalogues were out of print, no one saw a reason to preserve the 3500 and 3600-series catalogue numbers at all. Thus 3601 in Morris's original number assignments became 08.143.1, for example. Mentions of instruments acquired 1906-1929 in departmental lists and correspondence, which use original catalogue numbers, cannot be cross-referenced to the current accession numbers without a list (which is available in the Musical Instruments department).

<sup>94</sup> *Asia* catalogue, 1903, 4.

played in their native settings, were also praised.<sup>95</sup> The disadvantage was that since new acquisitions were inserted into the displays in the right places, the catalogues were soon outdated vis-a vis the displays.



*Photo obtained by Morris to illustrate the Collection's shamisen (89.4.106), shoulder drum (89.4.101), and uta daiko (89.4.92.) The photo was displayed in the case under the uta daiko*

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<sup>95</sup> See, e.g., *Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (February 1907), 21–22.

(then labelled "Taiko Drum") beginning in 1914, as shown below.



The 1888 catalogue written by Brown and her son before she approached the Museum described the approximately 276 instruments of her initial gift, so the need for a revision became obvious only when the installation of 1894 displayed instruments acquired since that writing. Foreseeing this need, on December 22, 1893, Brown wrote to Cesnola ". . . this only makes me feel more strongly the . . . importance of a carefully prepared catalogue," and on September 4, 1895, she wrote formally to propose a "small catalogue." Inevitably, and since the Browns were prepared to underwrite the printing costs, she got her way: by December 2, 1895, she was directing Cesnola to have the Museum photographer complete the pictures of all of the instruments in galleries 27 and 28 for a catalogue.

It took five years to complete the first ninety-eight-page guide—to the Asiatic instruments in Gallery 27. Morris began sending pages to the printer in July 1900 and the book appeared in 1901.<sup>96</sup> The first edition of one thousand sold out in three years, and another edition of one

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<sup>96</sup> The titles and sequence of the Museum's musical instrument catalogues from this period are complex. Most are headed *Handbook 13*, because in 1887 the Museum began publishing numbered "handbooks" for different collections (e.g., *Handbook No. 1, Pictures by Old Masters*). Thus the 1901 *Preliminary Catalogue* for the Asian instruments was entitled *Handbook 13, I*. The next year, in her introduction to the 1902 *Guide to the European Instruments*, Brown explained that "this handbook," although the second

thousand copies was printed in 1906, by which time the Asia gallery was numbered 38.<sup>97</sup> As soon as the catalogues were completed, the Museum posted discreet signs in the instrument galleries noting that "catalogues of the Crosby Brown Collection are on sale."<sup>98</sup>

In 1901, after completion of the *Asia* catalogue, Brown asked the aforementioned Canon Galpin to come from England to supervise the next in the series, the catalogue of the European collection. After Galpin had classified the instruments, this volume duly appeared in 1902, in a version without instrument numbers, and at Brown's request Galpin then prepared a fancy new edition limited to the keyboard instruments; this came out in 1903, with the instruments numbered and photographed. The *Europe* catalogue covered galleries 25 and 26, the cases in the center of galleries 27 and 28 that contained keyboard instruments, and was popular enough to be reprinted in 1904.<sup>99</sup> Mr. Brown simply paid the printer and then invoiced the Museum for reimbursement. On December 29, 1903, the Board of Trustees agreed to pay \$2,229.62 for printing the catalogue, but "consider[ed] it inexpedient to advise a further publication of so expensive a catalogue." John Crosby Brown responded rather frostily that he personally had paid more than \$3,500 for the photographs and proofs for catalogues to date, that he had NOT asked to be reimbursed for these costs, and that the Museum had been given the negatives of the photographs that he paid for.<sup>100</sup>

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to appear, would constitute Volume I of the "general catalogue" of the collection. So it was headed *Handbook No. 13, Catalogue of the Crosby Brown Collection Vol. I, Europe*. She retained this format for the *Musicians' Portraits, Historical Groups, Asia, and Africa* volumes, published 1904–07: each had the heading *Handbook 13, Catalogue of the Crosby Brown Collection*, a volume number from I to IV, and the subject matter. By 1907 Handbook 13 included five volumes, priced variously from ten cents to one dollar. (Three of these were also reprinted with changes during those years.) Two catalogues were printed "outside" of the Handbook 13 series. In 1903 Brown asked Galpin to prepare a quarto, illustrated catalogue (all other volumes were octavo), which her preface describes as "in part a reprint, and in part a supplement . . . for keyboard stringed instruments, plucked spinets, virginals, harpsichords, etc., corresponding to Class I Division II Section A of Handbook 13." A decade later, Morris completed the final volume of the catalogue, *Oceanica and America*, published without the "Handbook 13" title. Morris's introduction states that the constant rearrangements of the collection since the earlier catalogues meant that "it is now proposed to issue the final catalogue of the collection in four volumes." This *Oceanica* volume, although published as Volume II, was supposed to be the first of the four, but war came, Brown died, and no further catalogues or editions were published.

<sup>97</sup> Letters, Morris to printer W. J. L. Davids, July 9 and September 27, 1906.

<sup>98</sup> See, e.g., 1914 photograph of Gallery 35, Mus 1248.

<sup>99</sup> See *Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 10 (October 1914), 204–06; see also *American Recorder*, November 1974; *Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 5. Of the 1,000 copies of the first edition of the *Keyboard* catalogue, Brown gave away 61, 20 were sold (price ten cents), 4 given to libraries, and 915 remained several years later. Between 1901–14, the Museum paid \$11,602.31 to two different printers for 9,500 copies of the various Brown catalogues—including several reprints. See September 20, 1933, ledger entries. Sales figures are somewhat misleading, as in the early years all Museum catalogues were available free on request to any Museum member.

<sup>100</sup> On January 4, 1904, however, the Museum's staff photographer reported that he had made over two thousand negatives and about six thousand prints of the Collection—all paid for by the Museum.

The cataloguing continued briskly, and *Musicians' Portraits* appeared in 1904. Clara Buffum, a bookbinder from Providence, RI, was employed (with her pay underwritten by the Browns) to prepare the volume, which documented both a collection of about five hundred portraits of musicians bought by Mrs. Brown's brother in 1899 from the French auction house Drouot and donated to the Museum, and about two hundred similar portraits donated by Mrs. Charles B. Foote.<sup>101</sup> The following year saw the publication of *Historical Groups*, a guide to the collection items on display in Gallery 39, priced at twenty cents, the standard charge for most of the illustrated catalogues.<sup>102</sup> When the Museum informed John Crosby Brown that no funds were available to print this catalogue, he paid for it himself.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *New York Independent*, May 23, 1901; *Evangelist*, May 16, 1901; see 1936 Museum letter to reference librarian at the New York State Library; see also *Bulletin*, Vol. 9., No. 10 (October 1914), 204–06. Buffum also prepared drawings of musical notation which were displayed in the Musical Instrument galleries beginning in 1905. *Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (November 1905), 24.

<sup>102</sup> See, e.g., *Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (November 1905), 8.

<sup>103</sup> Letter, to George Story (Paintings curator and Acting Director after Cesnola's death), July 18, 1905.



*A leaf from the display of Musicians' Portraits mounted for display on a twelve-armed revolving stand in the center of Gallery 25 (later 35) of European Instruments.*

By 1906 the cataloguing project was ending.<sup>104</sup> On June 4 Brown informed Edward Robinson (Museum Assistant Director, 1905–10; Director, 1910–31) that "I am quite sure I can get my last catalogue out this summer," and in that year Robinson approved both a new edition of the *Asia* catalogue and the issuance of a catalogue in three sections for *Africa, Oceania, and North America*, with twenty illustrations for Africa. In 1906 the *Asia* and *Europe* volumes were reprinted, but work on the final volume, Volume III, —consisting of three "books" for Africa,

<sup>104</sup> Letter, October 27, 1906. Museum Assistant Secretary Kent wrote to Brown asking whether a "popular and simple account of the musical instruments, taking up in Baedeker fashion the more important and striking pieces" to add to the Museum handbooks and popular guides "would meet with your approval . . . ?" Clearly Kent hoped that the Browns would underwrite an additional publication for the Museum.

Oceania, and North America—took longer. This area of the collection, and these books of the catalogue, clearly presented the greatest challenges, owing to the unfamiliar nature of the instruments, although at the same time these were some of the rarest and most interesting parts of the collection.<sup>105</sup>



*Sesando*, late 19th century. Nusa Tenggara, Timor Island, Indonesia. Bamboo, wood, palm (*Borassus flabellifera*), wire. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.1489).

As early as April 11, 1903, John Crosby Brown had written to Cesnola that the catalogue for non-Western aboriginal peoples presented great difficulties because of the lack of knowledgeable experts. The Browns knew of no one competent in the area except Edwin H. Hawley, custodian of the Smithsonian Institution's Collection of Musical Instruments (which largely, though not exclusively, comprised instruments of American Indians). John Crosby Brown therefore urged Cesnola to "borrow" Hawley. Needless to say, Cesnola did what he was told and wrote the secretary of the Smithsonian "on behalf of Mrs. J. Crosby Brown" to ask that Hawley be given

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<sup>105</sup> Unfamiliarity with these instruments persisted. A 1977 *Bulletin* (Vol. 35, No. 3 (Winter 1977–78)) illustration of the *sesando*, or Indonesian tube zither (89.4.1489), given by Brown was printed upside down because no one in the Museum department responsible for printing the *Bulletin* knew how it was supposed to look. Hawley correctly identified the instrument as a *sesando* by letter to Morris of 11 May 1907, but 70 years later Museum publications still erroneously described as a *valiha* from Madagascar.

leave to come spend "a few weeks" at the Museum—at Museum expense—to "assist in the proper labeling and cataloguing of the musical instruments . . . in our collection."<sup>106</sup>

Hawley duly appeared, and along with Morris and Galpin, working from England—he never personally saw the collection again after his 1901 visit—put the Oceania section of the catalogue together. By late 1906 John Crosby Brown commissioned Galpin to write a *Bulletin* article about the volume.<sup>107</sup> John Crosby Brown personally was most involved with this volume: in March 1907 he wrote to Morris with page-by-page edits to the text of the preface, and notes about such details as whether Fiji is properly considered to be Polynesia, if Australia is classified as Melanesia. In June he was still copyediting the catalogue. But finally, in late 1907, the Museum had published parts one (*Africa*) and two (*Oceania*) of Vol. III of the catalogue, *Instruments of Savage Tribes and Semi-Civilized Peoples*, describing the collections in parts of galleries C-36 and C-37.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Hawley corresponded extensively with Morris until he died in 1918; they exchanged photos and information about instruments in their respective collections, and Hawley reviewed and edited the proofs of the 1914 catalogue for Morris. His contributions to the Museum musical instrument cataloguing effort were almost incalculable; he spent countless hours locating and writing out sources for the naming of non-Western instruments, and helping to identify their origins, methods of playing, etc.

<sup>107</sup> It appeared at *Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (February 1907), 21–22. Letters, John Crosby Brown to Galpin, November 7, 1906; Morris to Galpin, November 17, 1906.

<sup>108</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 9, No. 10 (October 1914), 204–06.





*The raven rattle, from the Tsimshian tribe, Skidgate, Queen Charlotte Islands, British Columbia, was a relatively "new" instrument when James G. Swan, an early agent of the U.S. government in Washington Territory and a great authority on the Indians of the region, acquired it in 1884. It shows power transferred from the kingfisher at right, to the human, and the raven's emblematic belly at left. (Rattle, 19th century. British Columbia, Canada. Wood, paint, sinew, pebbles. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.2161)).*

Cataloguing next turned to the last of the three catalogue sections planned to cover the instruments of the world's indigenous peoples. On March 1, 1907, Mrs. Brown wrote to Assistant Director Edward Robinson directing that photos of the North American Indian instruments be made promptly and out of the sequence ordained by the Museum, as "this will be my last catalogue." Robinson (naturally) acceded, but this catalogue of American Indian instruments proved the most difficult of all. No effort was spared in doing research—Morris traveled to Chicago's new Field Museum in 1907, for example, to examine their collection—but on February 8, 1909, John Crosby Brown, who then had only a few months to live, wrote carefully to Sir Purdon Clarke: "It is extremely important there should be no further delay in printing the catalogue of the North American Indian collection . . . this work should be done during Mrs.

Brown's lifetime and under the supervision of Miss Morris as she is the only person in this country that we know of who is competent to do this work . . . also arrangement should be made this summer for a leave of absence for Miss Morris for a few months abroad for a conference on these matters especially with the Rev. Mr. Galpin . . . kindly give this matter your early attention." The "America" section finally went to press in 1911, but it was not until 1913/14, that the complete *Oceanica and America*—the final volume of the catalogue—appeared.

### 1909–1929: Maintaining the Collection



*Looking south from Gallery C-26 into C-27–28 (they were separated only by columns), after the instruments moved from the second to the first floor in 1914.*

As has been seen, in the fifteen years after their initial gift, the Browns made possible the completion and cataloguing the Crosby Brown Collection. But by about 1906, Mrs. Brown's health had deteriorated, and she completely stopped visiting the Museum. While her husband was also in failing health by this time, he took a larger role with respect to the Collection in the last years of his life, when he was no longer active in business.

The last major change to the Collection supervised by John Crosby Brown took place just before he died in 1909. Wing F (later named the Morgan Wing), was built that year to house the collection of decorative art purchased by J.P. Morgan from the Parisian interior designer Georges Hoentschel. Access to the new Hoentschel wing, which extended north along Fifth Avenue beyond Wing C, was through doors cut in musical instruments' Gallery C-35. When the plans were revealed, John Crosby Brown wrote to Sir Purdon Clarke in great displeasure: "I think it important to determine without further delay what disposition is to be made of Mrs. Brown's collection of musical instruments . . . as that gallery [C-35] will now become a passageway into the Henschel [sic] Wing . . . [which] interferes seriously with the scientific classification of the instruments . . . and will necessitate a rearrangement . . . and a new catalogue . . . kindly give this matter your prompt attention."<sup>109</sup> On February 17 he wrote again to Sir Purdon: "If you will give your consent to an entire rearrangement and recataloguing of the instruments with Miss Morris we can make a satisfactory installation in the five galleries that we now have, provided also we can have some space . . . in the Hoenstschel wing." Within two days Sir Purdon acceded to these suggestions, and John Crosby Brown agreed.<sup>110</sup> John Crosby Brown died June 25, 1909.

Brown's health deteriorated further after her husband's death. By 1911 she was nearly blind, and the care of the collection had devolved entirely onto Morris, whose stature at the Museum increased commensurately—to assistant curator in 1910 and associate curator in 1921. The *Oceanica* catalog was published in 1913/1914 with Morris as sole author. By far the most professional of the catalogues, the notes on each instrument were extensive, and included footnotes and citations to examples in other collections, as well as a 22 page bibliography of the scholarly primary and secondary sources in several languages consulted by Morris. It also reprinted Brown's last words relating to her beloved collection: the introduction she had prepared for the *Africa* catalogue which was ultimately published in 1907. The introduction acknowledged particularly the assistance of the many people who had been integral to the formation of the collection in prior decades. Brown died in 1918.<sup>111</sup>

Before her death, Brown's donations, which had numbered in the hundreds each year between 1895 and 1905, slowed to a trickle; the last was in 1915.<sup>112</sup> But, as the Collection became more and more widely known, it grew through other means: offers arrived steadily at the Museum, of instruments available for purchase, loan, or gift. Then, as now, most turned out to be "fakes" or of little interest: Morris, firmly but courteously, declined hundreds of "Stradivarius" violins, and one violin purportedly having belonged to Thomas Jefferson, but she accepted some objects. A notable gift came in 1911, when four keyboard instruments were offered by the concert pianist

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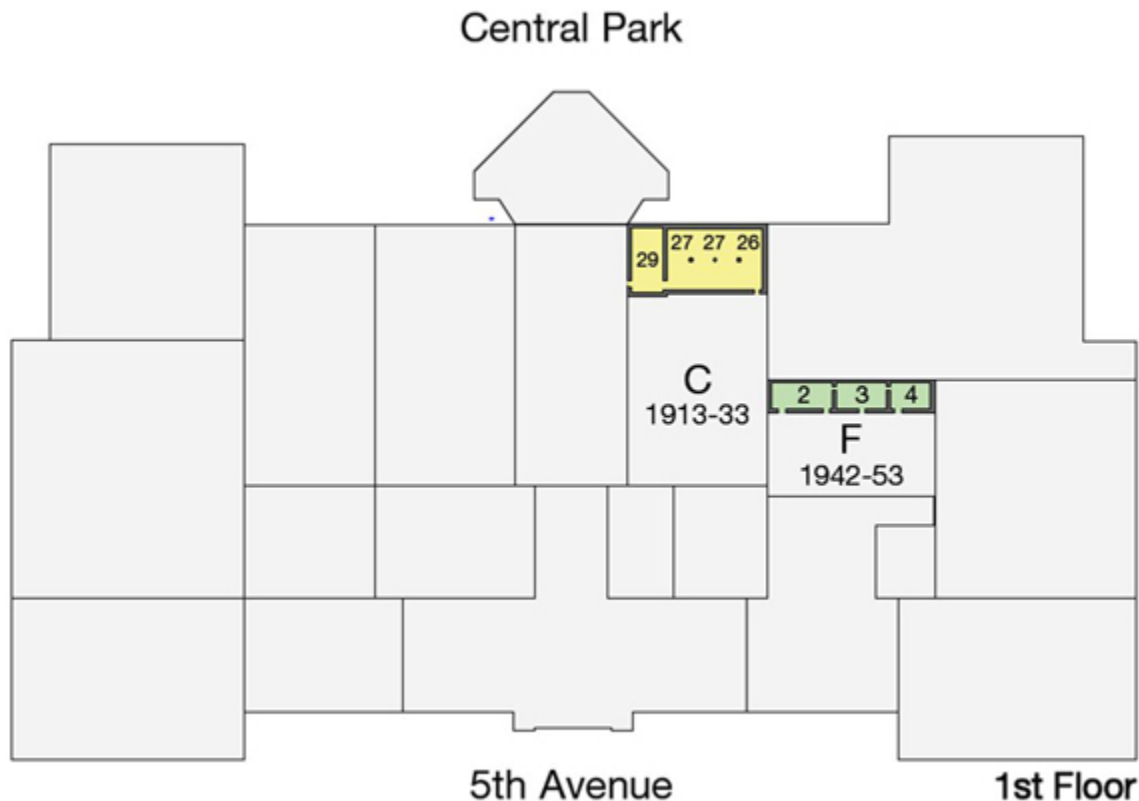
<sup>109</sup> Letter, February 8, 1909.

<sup>110</sup> Letter, John Crosby Brown to Museum Secretary Robert de Forest, May 14, 1909.

<sup>111</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No 4 (April 1918), 89. Morris wrote Brown's obituary for the Museum: "The interest thus awakened [in instruments] readily developed under the stimulus of a natural inclination for collecting and a mind that responded to the inspiration of large undertakings . . . Of the wealth of her rich personality she unstintedly gave to all who were favored with her friendship . . . her work reflects the nobility of her ideals"

<sup>112</sup>The Museum's Central Cataloging Department reflects 3,336 items donated by Brown after the original 278; the last item was given in 1915.

Bernardus Boekelman (1838–1930). Boekelman was a Dutch immigrant who played for the Philharmonic Society of New York under Leopold Damrosch and was later Music Director at Miss Porter's School in Connecticut, where the Brown daughters were educated. His editions of Bach's fugues were greatly respected. Boekelman gave four early keyboard instruments: a Ruckers virginal (11.176.1), a portable piano, a spinet, and a miniature spinet. The virginal—dated in ink 1622 and signed "Johannes Rukers fecit"—is the most important; as noted in Morris's *Bulletin* article about the gift, it could have been the instrument in Vermeer's 1664 painting *The Music Lesson*. It has its original stand, and a four-and-a-half-octave keyboard.<sup>113</sup>



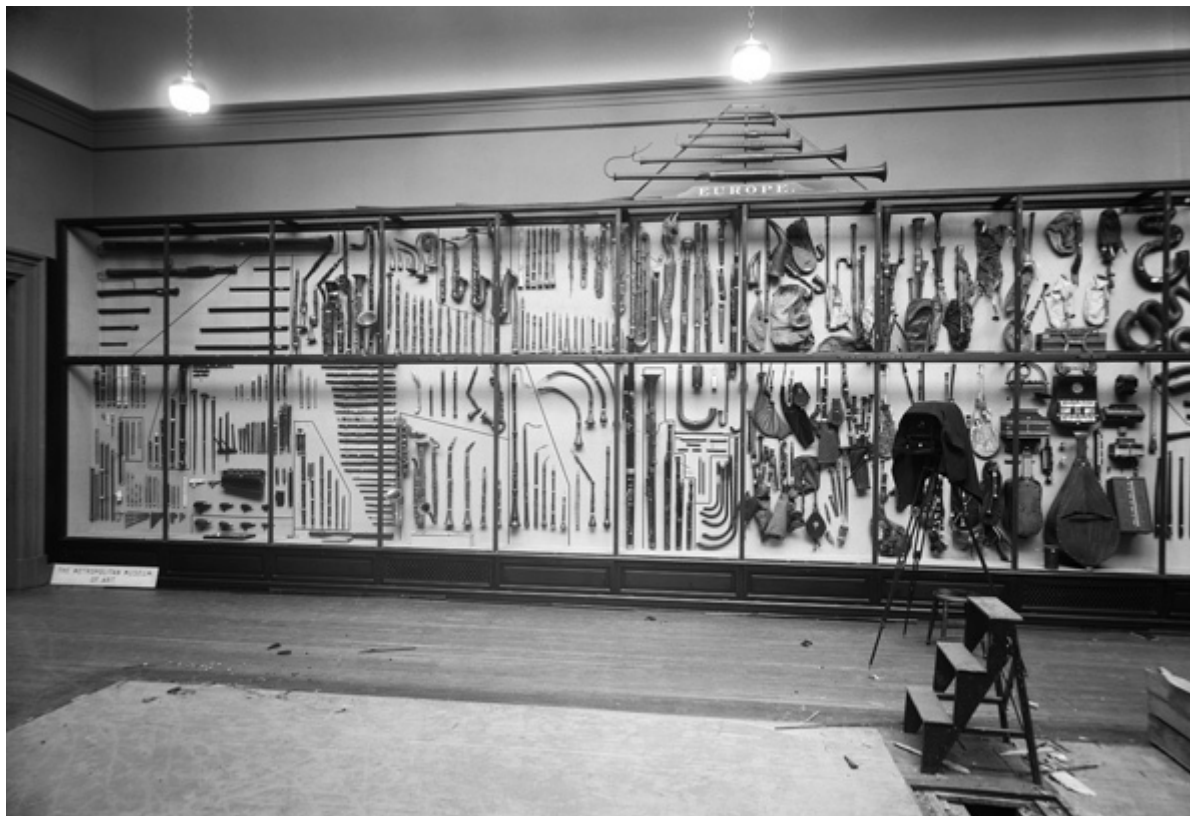
*Musical Instrument gallery spaces, 1913–53.*

It was also Morris who oversaw the necessary work in 1913 and 1914, when the Museum displaced the musical instruments in order to install the bequest of department store magnate Benjamin Altman in rooms C-35–39, "formerly occupied by the world-famous Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments." In September 1914 the Brown Collection was reinstalled on the first floor at the back of Wing C, in Rooms 26–29 (called the "Parkside Galleries" because they overlooked Central Park). It seems to have been at this time that a few instruments were dispersed among the period rooms in the Decorative Arts galleries, where ironically they

<sup>113</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 12 (December 1911), 230–231.

remained more visible, for longer, than the bulk of the collection.<sup>114</sup> The amount of space—6,300 square feet—and number of cases—421—in the Parkside galleries virtually replicated the 1909 arrangement negotiated by John Crosby Brown; however, the new space was divided into one small room plus a very long gallery subdivided by columns. (Hence the somewhat confusing references in later articles to most of the instruments being "crammed" into a single long room.)

During these years there were administrative as well as physical changes for the Collection. The Museum established a Department of Decorative Arts in 1907; the curator until 1917 was the Berlin-trained Wilhelm Valentiner.<sup>115</sup> Morris and the instruments were nominally under his authority, but Valentiner appears to have deferred completely to Morris. After he resigned, Morris reported to Joseph Breck, curator of Decorative Arts (1917–33), who took a more active role about what new acquisitions to make (generally none), what to lend (generally nothing), and the like.<sup>116</sup>



*Gallery C-36, "Europe," on the second floor, in 1913, as it was being disassembled in preparation for the installation of the Morgan Wing. The floor cases have already been removed. Photography equipment used to record the installations for recreation on the first floor is visible.*

<sup>114</sup> See e.g., *Arts and Decoration*, Vol. 4, No. 8 (June 1914), with a photograph of the Couchet harpsichord on display with Louis XV furniture in Gallery F-13.

<sup>115</sup> Valentiner eventually resigned from the Museum, with cordial mutual expressions of goodwill, after an extended period of leave while he returned to Germany to fight for the Kaiser.

<sup>116</sup> Many decades later, Valentiner, who returned to the United States after World War I and served as director of the Detroit, L.A. County, and Getty museums, was on a lecture panel with Emanuel Winternitz, then newly appointed to take charge of the musical instruments collection.

During the first twenty years of its existence, Museum personnel recognized and referred to the Collection as a separate department, some forty years before its actual creation.<sup>117</sup> After World War I ended this practice appears gradually to have come to an end. But Brown's death did result in the collection's becoming more integrated into the Museum, and in some innovations that were typical of other Museum departments but theretofore unprecedented for Musical Instruments. Thus Morris for the first time mounted temporary loan exhibitions in the Musical Instrument galleries: for example, in 1920, of musical manuscripts and incunabula; and, in 1928, for the Schubert Centennial.<sup>118</sup> She also expanded the lecture program to include the new medium of radio: in January 1926, she gave the second (by four days) radio broadcast ever made from the Museum, on "The Instruments of the Orchestra."<sup>119</sup> Morris's lectures often included performances by several musicians—for the winter 1923 season, "Miss Alice Nichols and the Euphonic Trio" accompanied all eight of Morris's lectures preceding the Mannes symphony concerts.<sup>120</sup> For the winter 1920 season, the accompanists were Mrs. Henry L. DeForest, daughter of John Crosby Brown and wife of the lawyer Henry DeForest, whose father was Secretary of the Museum, and Miss Marie Louise Todd.

*Museum announcement of Morris's 1921 series of "Illustrated Lectures" on "The Orchestra."*

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<sup>117</sup> See, e.g., letters dated March 15 and 16, 1906, from Morris, on Museum stationery headed "Department of Musical Instruments, The Crosby Brown Collection"; see also letters from Frances Morris writing officially to, *inter alia*, the trustees, signed "F. Morris Curator of Musical Instruments."

<sup>118</sup> *Bulletin* Vol. 15, No. 9 (September 1920), 215.

<sup>119</sup> *Bulletin* Vol. 21, No. 1 (January 1926), 20.

<sup>120</sup> *Bulletin* Vol. 17, No. 12 (December 1922), 251.



### **The Significance of the Brown Collection**

A century ago the Brown collection was unusual, not primarily because it was large, but because it was comprehensive. In the late nineteenth century, finding beautiful and high-quality Western European instruments was not difficult, if one were prepared to pay for them. Such pieces were widely appreciated (keyboards and strings more than wind instruments), and no one questioned the validity of collecting them.

Collecting non-Western instruments—particularly those of the then-called "savage tribes"—by contrast, was anything but easy. It was hard to find them; it was hard to know how to value them (and Brown, while willing to pay fairly, was never one to overpay), hard to know what to call them, hard to tell how they had been played, and complicated to tell where they were made. Hundreds of exchanges in the Brown/Morris correspondence are efforts to determine whether a given piece of wood or bone or glass is a musical instrument—as opposed to, for instance, a club,<sup>121</sup> snuffbox, or tobacco pipes. Most contemporary views placed little value on "aboriginal"

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<sup>121</sup>See, e.g., letter, Morris to Charles W. Mead—a curator at the American Museum of Natural History and author of publications on Inca musical instruments—asking whether anyone there knows "what the

instruments, and viewed paying money for them or giving them space in an art museum as a waste of resources better spent on a few more fine keyboards. But Brown declined dozens of the latter, and instead sought out examples from places where neither she nor most Museum visitors had ever been, together with photographs of those or similar instruments being played in their native places and contexts. And because these exotic pieces were so little valued, almost no one else saved them. Her Burmese contact, for example, informed Brown proudly that as soon as the missionaries had converted the natives successfully, they "adopt[ed] our tunes and play[ed] upon organs and accordions from America."<sup>122</sup> Today many highlights of the Crosby Brown Collection are things that few people in 1889 would have kept, let alone worked actively to obtain, and the nineteenth century photographs are similarly immensely valuable ethnographic records.

### **Musical Performances and Demonstrations: 1884–1940**

Brown and Morris's vision took into account how instruments sounded as well as how they looked. Thus she went to great lengths to ascertain the key of every instrument, particularly the non-Western ones that Museum audiences would find strange.<sup>123</sup> In an era when sound recordings were far too cumbersome for Museum applications, Brown commissioned models and replicas so that visitors could play them and hear the sounds of the originals on display.<sup>124</sup> Morris gave and others gave lectures on the instruments, and in many cases the lectures included demonstrations of the instruments. Brown and Morris were willing to, and did, lend instruments for concerts outside the Museum, when asked by people they trusted<sup>125</sup> But as far as we know, the Browns never sponsored a concert.<sup>126</sup>

#### **David Mannes**

Though not Brown's focus, performances did happen during her era—at the Museum, and on her instruments. And, because of the involvement of instruments from the collection, it is appropriate

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accompanying object is . . . marked "flute" . . . it might be a whistle, still it seems to me more likely to be a club," May 3, 1907; *see also* 1906 correspondence between Morris and M. F. Savage, concerning a Middle Eastern glass ointment jar filed down to make a musical instrument.

<sup>122</sup> Letter, Stevens to Brown, May 22, 1888.

<sup>123</sup> *See, e.g.*, letter, Morris to Mead, about how to determine the key of each Indian whistle and flute in the collection, March 18, 1907; *see also* letter, Morris to flautist Godfrey Pretz, April 5, 1907, describing how Georges Barrere, principal flute of the New York Symphony, spent time at the Museum providing her with the pitch of the Indian flutes.

<sup>124</sup> The Hutchings Votey organ company of Boston donated models of organ actions, and Strauch Brothers of New York donated piano construction models, both in 1904. *See*, original labels; correspondence between Morris and Strauch Bros., regarding copies made of piano actions, February–September 1906.

<sup>125</sup> In 1898, for example, Brown agreed to lend oboes to Frank Damrosch for a performance of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*, though they proved to be in the wrong key and thus were not used.

<sup>126</sup> Letter, Frank Damrosch to Brown, March 25, 1908. She did support music education in other venues; for instance, she donated a clavichord to the Institute of Musical Art, predecessor to The Julliard School, in 1908, for the use of students there.



to describe them here. The very first non-"departmental" Museum concerts took place because Museum parties, such as the gallery openings, always had an orchestra providing background music. In the earliest years of the Museum, the Mendelssohn Glee Club performed, but from 1905 on, the conductor for most, if not all, Museum functions was David Mannes, the founding figure in the distinguished history of Museum musical performances. A violinist beginning in 1891 with the New York Symphony, and later its concertmaster, he founded with his wife, Clara Damrosch, The New School's Mannes College of Music. He appears to have first conducted at the Museum on November 15, 1905, when he led the New York Symphony Orchestra at a reception for eight thousand honoring the Museum's new director, Sir Purdon Clarke.<sup>127</sup> Over the next several years, Mannes and the New York Symphony functioned almost as the "house orchestra" for all of the Museum's non-public parties held by the director and trustees.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (January 1906), 17–18. On January 4, 1909, he was back for the opening of a loan exhibition of German Art. *Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (January 1909), 11–12 and 148. The program on this occasion was typical and included Wagner's *Kaiser March*, the introduction to the third act and the "Bridal Chorus" from *Lohengrin*; Mendelssohn's "Nocturne" from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Dvorak's *Slavonic Dances*; Saint-Saens's Prelude to *The Deluge*; *Solo for the Violin*, by Alexander Saslavsky; Humperdinck's "Dream Music" from *Hansel and Gretel*; Strauss's *Kaiser Waltz*; Schubert's *Moment Musical* and *Military March*; Meyerbeer's *Torchlight Dance*; and Wagner's Overture to *Rienzi*. He came again in September for the opening of the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition, and often thereafter.

<sup>128</sup> See, e.g., *Bulletin*, Vol. 6, No. 11 (September 1911), 205–06; *Bulletin*, Vol. 7, No. 11 (November 1912), 205; *Bulletin*, Vol. 8, No. 11 (November 1913), 252; *Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (February 1915), 32.



*David Mannes. Photograph by Editta Sherman.*

Mannes took an interest in all musical possibilities at the Museum. As early as 1911 he wrote to J.P. Morgan, chairman of the Board of Trustees, advocating installation of a pipe organ in the newly completed Great Hall for the purpose of holding regular concerts. Based on his experience conducting in the Great Hall, which had "wonderful acoustic properties," he suggested that "both

[visual and aural] arts would be served" if there were an organ there.<sup>129</sup> Morgan initially rejected Mannes's idea as too expensive,<sup>130</sup> but by 1914 the Museum had obtained an estimate of \$10,000 to build a pipe organ in the Great Hall.<sup>131</sup>

World War I brought the Museum's building program, including the pipe organ plan, to a halt, but at the same time the war was the catalyst for the first of what would prove to be thirty years of regular free public concerts at the Museum. As the *Bulletin* reported shortly after the United States entered the war:

[T]wo orchestral concerts will be given in the Fifth Avenue hall of the building on Saturday evenings, February 9 and 16, from eight to ten, by an orchestra of fifty-five performers, conducted by David Mannes. These concerts are offered by the Museum primarily to soldiers and sailors who are stationed in and near New York, and their friends, but they will be open to the general public without charge. The music will be of the same character as that given at the Museum receptions, and the National Anthem will be played each evening at nine o'clock.<sup>132</sup>

Attendance at the first of these soldiers' concerts was 781; the musicians were recruited by Mannes from the New York Symphony (and after the two groups merged, from the New York Philharmonic), and were paid union rates. Morris delivered a lecture illustrated with instruments from the collection, as she did for each Mannes concert through 1924 (others handled the lecture/demonstrations beginning in 1925).<sup>133</sup> John D. Rockefeller and his daughter Abby attended one of the 1918 concerts, and offered to pay for two more concerts the following year; thus in 1919, there were four instead of two:

[C]oncerts by an orchestra of fifty-two performers, selected from the best orchestras of the city, under the direction of David Mannes, are to be given in the Fifth Avenue hall of the Museum on the four Saturday evenings of this month . . . free to the public without tickets of admission, and the entire Museum, also, will be open to visitors on these evenings.<sup>134</sup>

These first concerts saw a tenfold increase in attendance, to over seven thousand for the sixth in the series. Museum President Robert de Forest then made a public appeal for more sponsors to underwrite free concerts. He estimated the cost of a single concert at \$1,000, or less than fifteen

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<sup>129</sup> Letter, February 5, 1911.

<sup>130</sup> Letter, December 19, 1911.

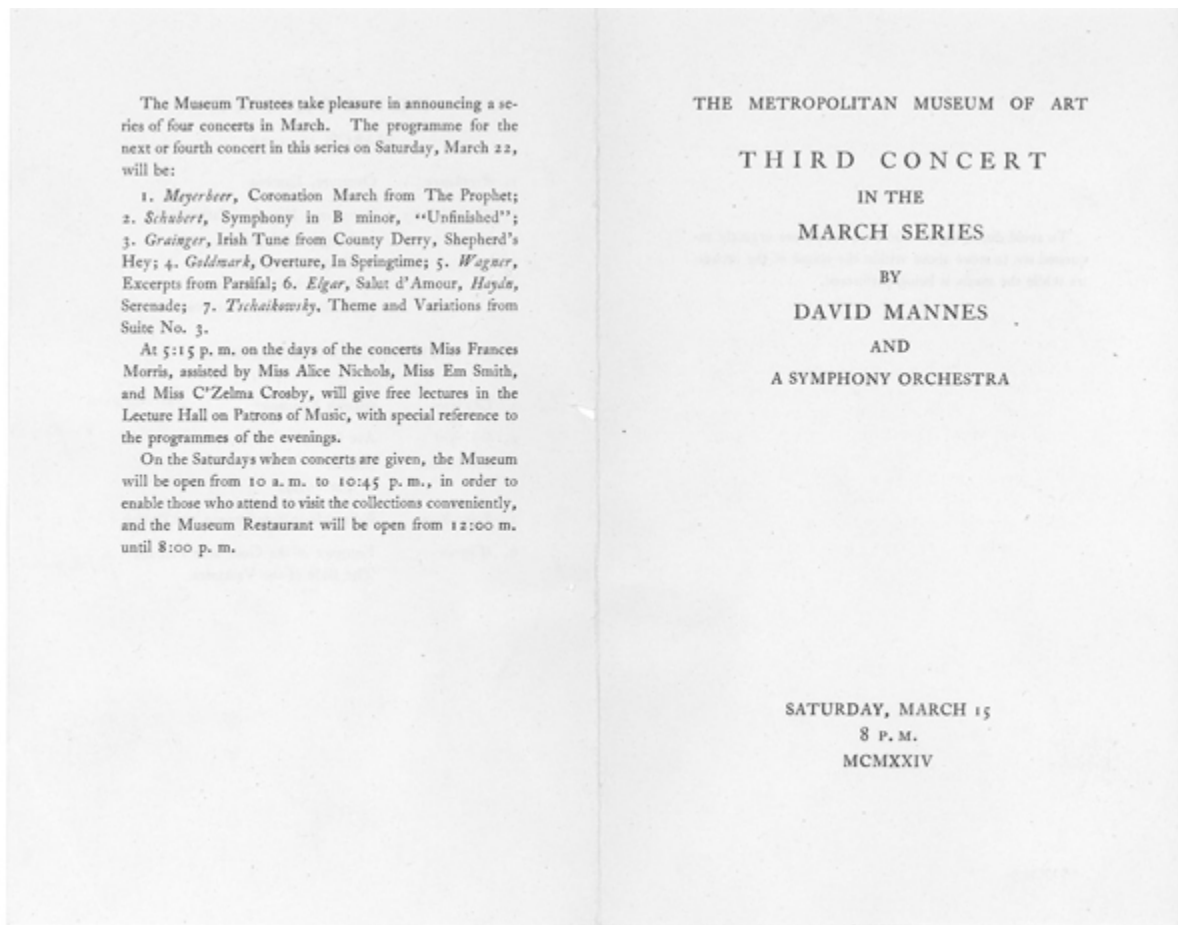
<sup>131</sup> Years later, in 1952, a Rieger pipe organ was purchased for \$10,500 and installed on the Great Hall balcony for Member Concerts. Letter, Winternitz to Taylor and Redmond (MMA President, 1947–64), November 25, 1952.

<sup>132</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (February 1918), 52.

<sup>133</sup> See *Bulletin*, (Vol. 27, No. 1 (January 1932)), 20-21; *New York Times*, March 24, 1947; Howe, *A History of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Vol. II. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), 145–46.

<sup>134</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 14, No.1 (January 1919), 2–4.

cents per attendee, primarily for heating, lighting, and guards.<sup>135</sup> Funding immediately came in for four more concerts in March 1919, and the series settled down to a regular eight per year: four in January, paid for by John D. Rockefeller for twenty years; and four additional ones in March, funded by various donors including George Blumenthal, Edward Harkness, and The Julliard School. The orchestra consisted of fifty to sixty musicians recruited by Mannes. Each concert was preceded by a lecture, on a musical topic not necessarily related to the concert at all.<sup>136</sup> The Museum's musical instruments were "frequently brought" to the lectures preceding the concerts for "minute inspection." The Museum stayed open until 10:45 on concert nights; concerts began at 8:00, and people were free afterwards to visit the galleries or eat dinner at the Museum Restaurant. Concertgoers stood, or sat on the floor, railings, or pedestals; the Museum distributed straw cushions for people to sit on. The orchestra performed on the North Balcony overlooking the Great Hall.



*Program for a 1924 concert by "David Mannes and a symphony orchestra," announcing Morris's preceding lecture/demonstrations.*

<sup>135</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (February 1919), 2.

<sup>136</sup> The four concerts in March 1920, for example, were each preceded by a lecture by Morris, on "Instruments of Ancient Egypt," "Medieval Instruments," "Instruments of the Italian Renaissance," and "Instruments of the French Court."

By 1921 attendance at Morris's pre-concert lectures ("arranged with reference to the programs of the symphony concerts conducted by David Mannes") exceeded 2,000; concert attendance exceeded 10,000 per performance, and eventually averaged 15,000 to 17,000 people, although there were chairs provided for only 1,500.<sup>137</sup> Starting in 1935, when they were donated, Mannes himself and his concertmaster often played the Museum's Stradivarius violins.<sup>138</sup> Concerts were broadcast throughout the Museum beginning in 1938, thanks to a pioneering sound system funded by Thomas Watson. Programming, which was initially limited to "popular programs of short and characteristic numbers," grew more sophisticated over the years, first to include entire symphonies, and later even more esoteric offerings such as Debussy's string compositions.<sup>139</sup>



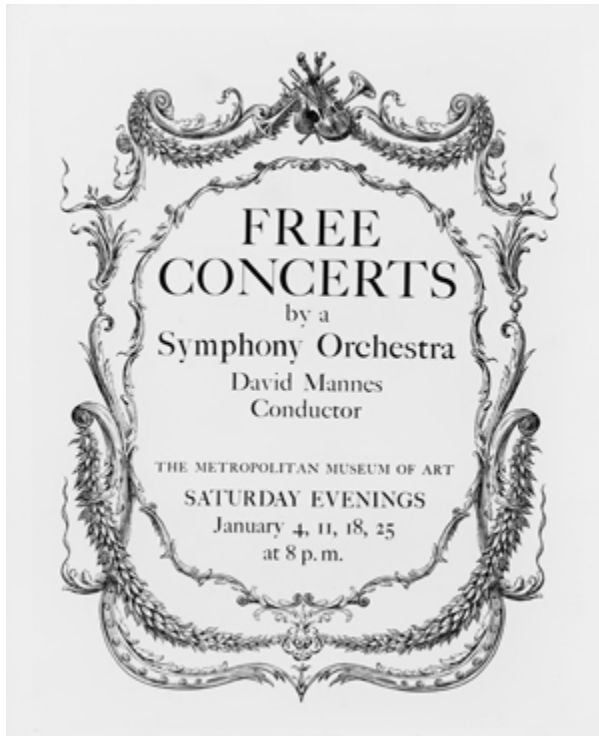
*Audience in the Great Hall for a Mannes concert, February 1, 1933.*

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<sup>137</sup> See, e.g., *Bulletin*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (April 1921), 89; see also *Time* magazine, January 18, 1937, "Music: Museum Concerts."

<sup>138</sup> The violins, now known as "The Antonius" (34.86.1) and "Francesca" (34.86.2), arrived at the Museum in May 1934.

<sup>139</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (April 1922), 87.



*Poster announcing the 1936 Mannes concerts.*

David Mannes conducted his final regular Museum concert on April 13, 1947, by which time he had played for audiences totaling over 1.5 million people.<sup>140</sup> (In 1956, he returned to lead a single concert in celebration of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.) After his retirement, the trustees acquired a bust of him to add to the Museum's collection, and named him as a Benefactor of the Museum. Mannes's retirement did not mark the end of the Museum concerts. Emanuel Winteritz, the curator when the Department of Musical Instruments was formally established, expanded the range and format of Museum musical performances beginning in 1941 to include concerts at the cutting edge of musical scholarship. However, Mannes's retirement effectively ended Museum sponsorship of large-scale free symphony concerts that brought aural and visual beauty into the reach of hundreds of thousands of people during two world wars and the Great Depression—times when the cost of a concert ticket was out of reach for many, and classical symphonic music was "popular music."<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> Museum press release, January 1946, announcing the twenty-ninth season of Mannes concerts.

<sup>141</sup> *Bulletin, New Series*, Vol. 7, No. 5 (January 1949), 146. The *Bulletin* described the Mannes concerts as having had "America's largest indoor audiences."



*Mannes conducting on the North Balcony of the Great Hall.*

### **1929–41: The Collection under Threat**

While Morris remained at the Museum, the musical instrument displays remained as installed during Brown's lifetime, in the care of someone with an encyclopedic knowledge of the collection from soon after its inception. But in early 1929, Morris—who had had day-to-day charge of the musical instruments for thirty-three years— requested a raise, a leave of absence, and promotion to full curator. The Museum gave her a raise—from \$5,500 to \$6,000 per year—but no promotion, and she resigned in August 1929. No other member of the Museum staff had ever been involved with the instruments. Overnight, the Crosby Brown Collection lost its only advocate, as well as all institutional knowledge of its history and significance. The effect was immediate and catastrophic.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Morris appears to have somewhat regretted her decision. In 1942 she wrote rather poignantly to Director Francis Taylor, "is it going to be possible to salvage some of the musical instruments, and could I in any way help—I'd love to." Taylor responded that he "hopes in the near future that it may be possible



*Gallery J-9, Decorative Arts of the Nineteenth Century, as it was installed in 1926, with the Nunns & Clark piano donated in 1906. (See Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 12 [December 1926], 289, for illustration.) For many years during the 1930s and again in the 1950s and 1960s, when the musical instrument galleries were closed, displays like this one kept a few instruments on view.*

After Morris's departure, the Collection reverted to the day-to-day supervision of Joseph Breck, curator of Decorative Arts. Instruments were not among his areas of interest. Less than six months after her resignation, he was writing to President de Forest: "For the ninety-ninth time I have been studying the Crosby Brown Collection, in the hope of finding some way of bringing this collection into line with modern methods of exhibition and with the scope of our collections as now defined. Frankly, the problem seems to me hopeless." He viewed the collection as "scientific rather than artistic," suggested returning it to the family for donation to a science museum, and indicated his belief that Brown's son William Adams Brown, the family representative for dealing with the Museum since his mother's death, would not oppose this plan.

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for us to do something more with the musical instruments," but there is no record that Morris was ever in touch with Winternitz, who arrived that year. She died in 1955.



Breck inventoried of the Collection with recommendations for what to keep (fifteen "artistically important" Western instruments) and what to deaccession (everything else).<sup>143</sup>

Very soon, a permanent solution to the instruments "problem" seemed to present itself: on May 15, 1931, the president of Julliard wrote to acknowledge Museum President William Sloane Coffin's "thrilling" suggestion that "if the family and the Museum authorities care to entrust [the Crosby Brown Collection] to us, we should display them properly in a large room, giving the public access to them, and we should keep them in condition and use them in historical concerts . . ." <sup>144</sup> Julliard's interest was in obtaining instruments for students to play; they did not teach music for the "primitive and oriental" instruments, and suggested that these be sent to the American Museum of Natural History. In 1932 the plan shifted slightly to one for a "Musical Center" headed by the New York Public Library. <sup>145</sup> On May 16, 1932, William Adams Brown agreed in principle to the transfer of the Crosby Brown Collection to the Library, with the provisos that a current, complete catalogue first be published by the Museum, and that some instruments be retained by the Department of Decorative Arts. On September 21, 1933, the trustees passed a resolution approving the loan of "all musical instruments not at present desired by the Museum" to "a proposed musical center." William Adams Brown cabled his approval. <sup>146</sup> This plan almost succeeded: during the Depression, many viable spaces for such a library/museum were available, and the Museum was an enthusiastic supporter of all of them, but the various plans all foundered for lack of funds to ensure ongoing operations.

While the Museum pursued this graceful way to deaccession the Collection completely, the instrument galleries were simply shuttered. The 1931 Museum guidebook describes the Musical Instrument collection in the same way as every guidebook since 1914, as located in galleries C-26–29 on the first floor. <sup>147</sup> In the 1933 guidebook, and every subsequent edition until 1945, those rooms are simply omitted from the floor plans, and there is no mention of Music or Musical Instruments in the index. <sup>148</sup> The instrument galleries were, in effect, converted to storerooms:

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<sup>143</sup> See letter, Breck to Winlock, June 3, 1932: "I am sending you herewith a list of the instruments which I recommend be retained . . . possibly one or two lutes might be added." The list comprised three pianos, three harps, four harpsichords, and five virginals.

<sup>144</sup> See also letter, Coffin to William Adams Brown, September 13, 1933.

<sup>145</sup> March 15, 1932.

<sup>146</sup> The Museum simultaneously proposed to return to the Drexel family all Drexel instruments, except for one Albrecht piano (89.2.185).

<sup>147</sup> As has been mentioned, there were also galleries numbered C-26–29 on the second floor; guidebook references to those numbers from 1931 to 1945 are to the second floor ones.

<sup>148</sup> Letter, White to her uncle William Adams Brown, forwarded to Winlock, January 27, 1938, complaining about the termites visibly eating the instruments. Though the rooms were closed to the public, occasionally someone did obtain permission to visit the instruments: one of Brown's granddaughters, clearly a chip off the old block, saw them and was appalled. Winlock responded: "I admit that what Mrs. White says about the present appearance of the collection is justified . . . but you will recall that for four or five years we have had the scheme with the Library in view, and it has seemed to the Museum that we would not be justified in going to the large expense of reinstalling the collection or employing a curator for it . . ." *New Yorker*, March 23, 1940, 28. A detailed three-part 1940 *New Yorker* Profile, "Masterpieces and Mummies" also describes how "some of the larger harps are in the basement

cases lined every wall, including in front of the windows, and instruments were crowded together and stacked on top of each other and in front of the cases.

In 1933, following Joseph Breck's unexpected death, the Department of Decorative Arts was divided into three new departments; musical instruments were classified with Renaissance and Modern Art, headed by Preston Remington. Remington conceded that neither he nor anyone else then at the Museum was knowledgeable about the Collection, and he evinced no interest in reversing Breck's determination to get rid of it. To the contrary, he recommended reducing the number of instruments to be kept from Breck's 15 to just 4 of the Collection's 3,611 items (including more than 225 "parts of instruments," 112 reproductions, 20 donated by third parties to Brown, who gave them to the Museum, plus Drexel's 44 items, and 35 "others" donated since 1884).<sup>149</sup>

On March 18, 1935, the increasingly desperate Museum trustees resolved to pay to get rid of the Brown collection: They appropriated \$10,000 per year for five years "to such organization as may accept the musical instrument collection when and if such an organization is duly constituted."<sup>150</sup> In furtherance of this plan, the Museum agreed to cooperate with the New York Public Library to bring the eminent German scholar Curt Sachs to be Curator of Instruments for the proposed combined museum and library of music.<sup>151</sup> Herbert Winlock (Museum Director, 1932–9) wrote to Carleton Sprague Smith—chief of the Music Division at the New York Public Library, and architect of the Library/Museum musical merger plan—that to "help our scheme of getting rid of the musical instruments," the Museum should give Sachs space and publicity for a

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but most of the collection clutters up a huge gallery [galleries C-26–28 were, as noted above, actually one large gallery] in the original red brick building [Wing C was red brick]. The group includes not only sound and healthy instruments, but a piano, flute, cornet, and violin dissected to show all their parts. Another item consists of two carved wooden life-size savages carrying a huge gong [89.4.2016]. The savages have only three toes on each foot and three fingers on each hand—an arrangement which the guards are unable to explain . . ." (Decades later Ken Moore identified the "savages" as oni, or Japanese demons, bearing a festival processional gong.) See also Kingsport, Tennessee *Times*, February 21, 1943: "up to this week it [the Brown Collection] has been huddled in a great dark room [C-26–28] at the back of the Museum . . . most of the instruments are still hiding there." Card catalogue notes reflect that many items not in the Wing C galleries were in Storeroom D-26 during the 1930s, and were still there in 1942. Memo, May 14, 1942, Faith Dennis, Decorative Arts Assistant Curator, to Winternitz.

<sup>149</sup> Memo, Remington to Kent, November 13, 1935; letter, Remington, August 18, 1933.

<sup>150</sup> April 2, 1935. Winlock outlined the latest proposal for a new musical instruments museum: the Museum would pay \$50,000 (the \$10,000 a year for five years, as previously agreed); the New York Public Library would pay \$40,000; the Carnegie Foundation would pay \$25,000; and the Rockefeller Foundation \$25,000. In subsequent years the Museum was blamed for delaying the Library project by twenty years when it decided to keep the Collection.

<sup>151</sup> Sachs, a founder of the field of organology, had in 1913 published a German dictionary of musical instruments which was the most comprehensive treatment of the field undertaken before that date. The following year he published his seminal treatise on the classification and terminology for musical instruments. This was too late to help Brown and Morris in their cataloguing, but Morris used Curt Sachs's treatise on ancient Egyptian instruments in her work in the Department. As a Jew, Sachs was dismissed from his posts in Germany in 1933 when the Nazi party was elected to power.

lecture series at the Museum.<sup>152</sup>

Professor Sachs duly arrived and worked at the Museum until mid-1940. He reported that the condition of the instruments was "wretched," and oversaw certain repairs, including some that became controversial later, but despite his work the Music Library never came into being.<sup>153</sup> Sachs's estimate of \$100,000 to repair and reinstall the collection at the Museum was also rejected.<sup>154</sup> Luckily his departure was followed very quickly by the arrival of the first official curator of the Department, a figure of critical importance in its history, Dr. Emanuel Winternitz.

But before Winternitz's arrival, it must be acknowledged, to the great credit of Breck, Remington, and the Museum, that their efforts to relocate the Collection during the 1930s did not preclude acceptance of a handful of spectacular gifts.<sup>155</sup> The first had its genesis in 1924, when the Museum received a lawyer's inquiry for an anonymous client (later identified as the Boston sculptor Annie Bolton Matthews Bryant) about the possible bequest of Stradivarius violins, to be used for Museum concerts, with the proviso that they never leave the Museum. Nothing definite was agreed at that time, but in 1932 Bryant's lawyer reiterated the inquiry, and Museum Director Winlock responded frankly that the Museum was attempting to get rid of the Collection, but would be happy to have the violins anyway if the donor were still willing to make the gift. The bequest was duly made in 1933, and the Museum became the owner of "two Stradivarius violins—at least they are so described and I think it quite possible that they are authentic." Bryant's will placed no restrictions on the donation.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Letter, July 31, 1936.

<sup>153</sup> *Musical Record*, 1940, 8. Sachs offended Museum personnel by publicly criticizing their lack of care for the collection, and Sachs claimed that the Museum had offended him by not paying him the salary agreed upon; see EW unpublished Memoir, *Curt Sachs*, but in 1943 Sachs and the Museum had a rapprochement when Winternitz invited Sachs to teach his New York University course on the History of Musical Instruments in the Museum galleries. Winternitz provided the slides and the instruments for demonstration. Sachs taught at the Museum for several years, and in 1964 Winternitz prepared the new edition of Sachs' great *Dictionary*.

<sup>154</sup> Letter, Carleton Sprague Smith to Winlock, November 12, 1937; Report, Curt Sachs, November 12, 1937; letter, William Adams Brown to George Blumenthal, January 2, 1940. In June 1938 Winlock informed Sachs that the Museum trustees had appropriated \$5,000 for the repairs of whichever instruments Sachs selected. Sachs arranged for skilled workmen to come from Europe to perform the repairs. Letter, Sachs to Winlock, June 14, 1938; letter, Faith Dennis, Decorative Arts Assistant Curator, December 19, 1939 to Chapman; see also Report from the Treasurer's office, March 3, 1941, showing \$2,275.82 spent in 1938 and \$2,605.17 in 1939 for labor and materials for repairs. In 1939, however, the Trustees voted not to continue the repair program beyond the first \$5,000—instead they considered using some of the allocated funds to pay Curt Sachs's salary.

<sup>155</sup> Remington had an "unwritten policy not to add to the collection" Memo, Remington to William Ivins, Assistant Director of the Museum October 6, 1939, and a stated policy prohibiting any purchases of instruments; he even declined the offer of Eda Kuhn Loeb to bequeath her instruments "of a pretty high quality" to the Museum—on the grounds that "almost none of the instruments would be of interest to us from a decorative standpoint." Memo, Preston Remington to William Ivins, April 27, 1934.

<sup>156</sup> Letter, Museum Director Winlock to David Mannes, July 24, 1933.

The two violins, called "The Antonius" (34.86.1) and "Francesca" (34.86.2), arrived in May 1934.<sup>157</sup> In February 1935 they were still languishing in the Registrar's office, but David Mannes finally shook them loose, and after they were restored to playing condition, on March 23, 1935, they made their Museum performance debut in the Bach Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor.<sup>158</sup> Shortly afterwards, Museum Director Winlock sent a rather casual memo to Preston Remington: "I have just been talking to Mr. Mannes and we agree that it would be well to have someone play them if we can find anyone who is used to the violin. I understand that there was such a person in the Museum, and I should like you to have him practice on them . . ."<sup>159</sup> No doubt the Museum guard given this assignment found practicing more enjoyable as a result.



*A seventeenth-century clavichord (89.4.1215), played in the galleries by Curator Emanuel Winternitz in the 1940s, before a seventeenth-century painting of Saint Cecilia (29.100.14) with*

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<sup>157</sup> Letter, Kent to Richardson, Bryant's lawyer, May 26, 1934.

<sup>158</sup> Letter, March 28, 1938, Registrar to Winlock. Sadly, when Mannes played one of the violins again soon afterwards, at a March 26, 1938, concert, he dropped the valuable Francois Tourte bow that had come with the violins, and broke it. Tourte is often known as the Stradivarius of the bow. Accidents notwithstanding, Mannes continued to play the Bolton violins at Museum concerts until his retirement.

<sup>159</sup> Memo, Winlock to Museum Registrar Henry F. Davidson, June 1, 1937.

a similar instrument. In *The André Mertens Galleries for Musical Instruments*, this painting is still displayed over early keyboards.

The other great acquisition of these years was also unexpected. On May 20, 1929, the earliest known Hans Ruckers double virginal was offered by B. H. Homan, and accepted on the recommendation of Frances Morris, who was still at the Museum, and Joseph Breck. The acceptance was on condition that the instrument be displayed for ten years and then be returned to the family if the Museum no longer wished to exhibit it. Future Museum Director James Rorimer, then newly graduated from Harvard and an assistant to Joseph Breck, described the new instrument in a *Bulletin* article as a highly ornamented double virginal, dated 1581, and the earliest documented instrument by the maker. It was said to have been given by Philip II of Spain to the Marquise of Oropesa in Cuxco, Peru, and thus to be one of the earliest Western keyboards to find a home in the new world.<sup>160</sup> The Ruckers was placed on prominent display; the only change from the prior edition made to the 1931 Museum guidebook's entry on Musical Instruments is a description of the two Ruckers virginals, the double one displayed in the "Swiss room" (Gallery L-1, part of the small extension of the Morgan wing built in 1924 and demolished in the 1970s to make way for the Temple of Dendur), and the other one in the corridor with the Todini baroque harpsichord, then known as the Pamphili (89.4.2929).<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (1930), 37–38.

<sup>161</sup> See, e.g., *Music Trades*, August 9, 1913. When Brown's brother bought it in Paris in 1901 from the former French ambassador to the Holy See, the harpsichord was believed to have been given by Pope Innocent X, a member of the Pamphili family who died in 1656, to his sister-in-law. In fact it was made by Todini in 1670 and exhibited as part of his musical museum, the Galleria Armonica. Todini's principal creditor bought it at a bankruptcy sale in the late seventeenth century; it stayed in that family for one hundred years, and passed through several other hands before the ambassador bought it in 1864. Decades later, while on a trip to Rome in 1949, Emanuel Winternitz also identified this pre-World War II photo of an early clay model for the Todini; the model is now housed at the National Musical Instrument Museum in Rome.



## 1941–49: Emanuel Winternitz and the Renaissance of the Collection



*Emanuel Winternitz in 1971, after the opening of the Department of Musical Instruments' first permanent galleries.*

The Museum's brand-new director, Francis Taylor, first asked Emanuel Winternitz to lecture at the Museum in late summer 1940. Winternitz began his work here in February 1941,<sup>162</sup> led the Department of Musical Instruments for more than thirty years, and served actively as curator emeritus until his death in 1983. When he arrived the collection had been closed to the public for a decade, and the Museum was committed to getting rid of the instruments permanently. Under his guidance, the Collection was not only saved for the Museum, but for the first time made an official curatorial department—professionally organized and administered, on a par with other Museum departments. His wide-ranging talents, interests, and connections gave the Collection a prominent role in the musical life of New York, and indeed internationally, and enabled Winternitz to maintain the integrity of the Department during what Philippe de Montebello acknowledged were almost twenty "difficult years of administrative indifference" in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>163</sup> A polymath with a sense of humor,<sup>164</sup> he was the first professionally educated curator of the instruments.

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<sup>162</sup> Letter, Horace Jayne (Museum Assistant Director, 1940–53) to Selective Service Board, July 3, 1942.

<sup>163</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Winter 1977–78), 1.

<sup>164</sup> See, e.g., his note on March 3, 1953, inviting Director Taylor to attend a Member Concert performance of a Handel oratorio and Dryden's *Ode to St. Cecilia*: if Taylor attended, "Handel would feel very flattered, and, of course, St. Cecilia also." His budget request for 1966 included: "New set of humidifiers employing alcohol, to keep the instruments intoxicated so they will not feel badly about damage sustained for lack of good climate"; "Pair of kettle drums with automatic drumming device to



*Director Francis Taylor, who formally "created" the Department of Musical Instruments.*

Born in 1898, Winternitz studied composition and music history, and learned to play three instruments before graduating from the Vienna Humanistisches Gymnasium in 1916. His uncle was a Roman Catholic bishop, but most of Winternitz's family belonged to the highly musical Jewish bourgeoisie of Vienna. He earned money during college by improvising accompaniments for silent movies,<sup>165</sup> and Brahms and Schoenberg were family friends who visited his grandparents' house to play a Bösendorfer piano that later accompanied Winternitz to the new world.

Winternitz was a junior officer in an alpine regiment in the Army of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1916 to 1918. After studying philosophy, he obtained a doctorate in law from the University of Vienna in 1922, helped to found the Vienna Volksheim—one of Europe's first schools of adult education—and then spent a year as a research fellow at the University of Hamburg with the great philosopher Ernst Cassirer. He practiced law from 1929 to 1938 in Vienna, was active in societies devoted to madrigals, Mozart, and Bach, philosophy and art, and

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bring absentees home from vacation when they overstay same"; and "Swiss music box containing seventy-two marches by Sousa, for a gift to the Treasurer's office, to be played in order to overcome melancholy induced by studying the Music Department budget requisition."

<sup>165</sup> Winternitz unpublished memoir, *Improvising*.

spent months of each of those years traveling and photographing Baroque architecture. Years later, as curator, he focused on the relationship between philosophy, Baroque architecture, and Baroque contrapuntal music.<sup>166</sup> He participated in Vienna in the famous PrivatSeminar of Professor Ludwig von Mises, who united philosophers and economists for over a decade in a fabled intellectual hothouse.

Winternitz managed to leave Vienna for Switzerland in April 1938, carrying his slides of Baroque buildings.<sup>167</sup> In Zurich he obtained a U.S. immigration visa, and in July sailed to New York via London, and settled in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with the help of the Friends' Service Committee. While seeking a permanent position, he lectured widely to support himself, on subjects that generally combined art history and music in a creative way. One class wrote afterwards: "we hope that if he gives this course next year he will have a larger enrollment. We doubt if he could have a more enthusiastic audience."<sup>168</sup> Francis Henry Taylor, then president of the Worcester Museum, heard him lecture in 1939, was impressed, and asked him to give a lecture series and mount an exhibition at Worcester.<sup>169</sup> By the time the lecture series took place in early 1940, Taylor had been appointed director of the Metropolitan Museum. He immediately contacted Winternitz to lecture at the Museum, and then enlisted him for assistance with the Crosby Brown Collection, a headache he had inherited.<sup>170</sup> During Winternitz's first decade at the Museum, with Taylor's support, the Department of Musical Instruments was formally created and had a "golden age."

Taylor initially hired Winternitz as a temporary worker in February 1941 to give a series of lectures entitled "Images and Imagination." Nothing in his initial appointment suggested that Taylor had in mind for Winternitz to work on the musical instruments collection, but after six

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<sup>166</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Ursula Luebbert, June 17, 1982. In the last year of his life, Winternitz wrote to a student: "I have often thought how much my immigration helped me to transform several of my Viennese dilettantic interests such as art history, history and theory of music, and comparative esthetics into a more unified field . . . the humanist education I had in Vienna helped me here to rethink many problems from a new, single perspective, and by the way, find a little niche for teaching and writing."

<sup>167</sup> Letter, Taylor to Charles Hendel, November 20, 1956. A letter from Taylor stated that Winternitz's service on the Italian border during World War I gave him such familiarity with the border mountains that he escaped Austria on skis after the Anschluss. However, Winternitz's unpublished reminiscences describe his immigration rather more prosaically: his legal secretary, carrying his suitcase, accompanied him to the Westbahnhof, where he caught a train to Switzerland. This same secretary, wife of a Nazi party member, was able to ship him twelve cases of his household furnishings a few months after he arrived in New York.

<sup>168</sup> Letter, Bessie Reuzzner to James Moyer, Massachusetts Department of Education, March 5, 1940; letter, Winternitz to Taylor, January 20, 1939.

<sup>169</sup> Letters, Taylor to Winternitz, July 20, 1939; October 6, 1939.

<sup>170</sup> See, e.g., letters, Winternitz to Roberta Fansler, MMA Education Department, October 12, 1940, and Huger Elliott, MMA Director of Educational Work, to Winternitz, November 23, 1940, outlining his lecture course for the Museum. For the first few months after his arrival, Taylor apparently assumed that the Museum plan for the "ultimate disposition of the Crosby-Brown musical instruments" would go forward. see e.g., letter, Taylor to Allen Wardwell, January 22, 1941, but by 1942 Taylor was instead informing the trustees of the "plan for the installation and display" of the Collection at the Museum. Minutes of the Executive Committee, October 19, 1942.



months Winternitz was given a permanent appointment as "Associate in Music." By 1942 Winternitz had convinced Taylor that the instruments had a future, and Taylor named Winternitz the "Keeper of the Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments."<sup>171</sup> Although musical instruments did not become a formal curatorial department until 1949, 1942 is the date often used by the Museum for the founding of the Department of Musical Instruments: Taylor referred to Winternitz as head of the "Department of Musical Activities" from then on, and the Museum supplied Winternitz with official letterhead for the "Department of Musical Activities" beginning in 1943, and referred to him publicly as "head of the Museum's Department of Musical Activities."<sup>172</sup> Taylor also specified that Winternitz should report directly to him as other curators did (rather than reporting to the curator of Renaissance and Modern Art, as Frances Morris had done).<sup>173</sup> Pretty soon, every aspect of Museum activity that remotely involved music would come into the purview of Emanuel Winternitz—even including the selection of recorded music to be broadcast throughout the Museum during the Christmas season, for example.<sup>174</sup>

### *New Beginnings*

Almost as soon as he arrived at the Museum as a lecturer in February 1941, Winternitz began repairing the instruments, with a view towards using them in his lectures. He also began

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<sup>171</sup> Report, Winternitz to Loughry, April 23, 1948; letter, Horace Jayne to Philip James of New York University, July 9, 1942; *see, e.g.*, Report of the Department of Musical Activities for the Year 1943. "Keeper," an English term synonymous with curator, has been used at the Museum from time to time, for example, for the "Keeper of the Altman Collection"; use of the title avoided a Museum ban on "improvements" (creating a new department would have been an "improvement") in force during WWII. Winternitz's salary in 1941 was \$2,500 per year; he did not attain Frances Morris's 1929 pay level of \$6,000 until 1947. In the interim, in 1945 Winternitz had noted to Museum administrators that his \$4,000 annual salary gave him just \$1.00 per week to live on after basic food, rent, and utilities, and that he was supporting his mother, who had been released after four years in a concentration camp and received permission to emigrate to the U.S. In January 1946 he got a raise to \$5,000, with "deep appreciation of the splendid work you have done for the museum," and only in August 1947 to \$6,000 for "distinguished service." President Robert de Forest had noted in 1920 that the average curatorial salary was \$6,200, so Winternitz's complaints seem eminently justified. *New Yorker*, March 30, 1940, 28.

<sup>172</sup> Memo, May 7, 1945; Museum press release, April 1949. Letterhead notwithstanding, Taylor asked Winternitz to use the title "Keeper" on his Museum visiting cards; Taylor noted that as a technical matter all of Winternitz's work on concerts was "assigned administratively" because the "trustees have never authorized a special department of musical activities."

<sup>173</sup> Starting in 1942 the *Bulletin* listed "Musical Activities and the Collection of Ancient Musical Instruments" as a "Subdepartment under the supervision of the Director."

<sup>174</sup> *See* unpublished Winternitz memoir, regarding Jarmila Novotna; <http://libmma.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15324coll20/id/1/rec/4>. The range of duties was broad: Winternitz founded the Junior Orchestra for Children of Members in 1944; on April 2, 1946, at the Museum dinner honoring General Eisenhower for his work saving art looted by the Nazis, Winternitz not only was asked to converse in German, Italian, and miscellaneous other languages with the foreign guests, but accompanied the soloist who sang "The Star-Spangled Banner." When the Museum needed a new Steinway concert grand piano for classes and auditorium concerts, Winternitz was sent to Astoria to test the instruments on offer, and to choose one. When the May 1954 *Bulletin* cover and much of the content were devoted to Musical Instruments, Winternitz wrote the copy. *See, e.g.* December 2, 1953 memo Winternitz to Taylor.

correcting and supplementing the long-unavailable catalogues (though, unfortunately, his corrections were never published), and photographing the collection.<sup>175</sup> By early June he had induced Director Taylor to notify the executive committee that the "condition of the Museum's collection of Musical instruments . . . [makes] necessary . . . an appropriation for the care, repair and rehabilitation of this collection." Significantly, there was no mention of disposing of the instruments, then or with the follow-up resolution Taylor sent to the trustees for \$5,000 for the "care and installation" of the Crosby Brown Collection. The trustees approved the resolution—the first time in a decade that there had been any acknowledgment that the instruments would be displayed at the Museum, rather than given to the New York Public Library.<sup>176</sup>

He also lectured prodigiously at the Museum and elsewhere, from the moment he first arrived until his death. In 1941, for example, besides the eight-lecture "Images and Imagination" series, the Museum's fall opening reception brochure announced a Winternitz "course in music appreciation for members" with "selections on the piano and phonograph" and, interestingly, "visits to the galleries of musical instruments." At this time, of course, this meant the long-mothballed Wing C galleries, which Winternitz fitted out with desks in the centers of the rooms, for classes. At the same time, he gave a lecture series on "Musical Structure" for the public.

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<sup>175</sup> Memo, Winternitz to Taylor, June 20, 1942; *see also* 1943 Report of the Department of Musical Activities to the Director.

<sup>176</sup> By the summer of 1942, intensive work to repair the instruments was underway. The repairers were Michael Moffat, the Museum's cabinetmaker from the 1920s to the 1950s, and Mr. Simmons. They glued cracks, shellaced paintings on instrument cases, waxed instruments, replaced worn leather parts of instruments and the like. See letters from Department secretary Josephine Bowlin to Winternitz, June and July 1942. Repairs were made using the best available technology, but it is still startling to read that "Johnson's floor wax dissolved in benzene" was the preferred wax for wooden instruments.



*Exhibition mounted by Winternitz in the Museum's Basement Lecture Hall Gallery, Wing E, to illustrate his first Museum lectures, "Images and Imagination," April, 1941.*

The bombing of Pearl Harbor later that year caused the Museum to transfer eighteen thousand fragile art objects to Whitemarsh Hall in Pennsylvania for storage, but Winternitz argued successfully that the risks to the instruments from being moved were greater than the risk of bomb damage if they stayed in place. In this way he ensured that the Collection was readily available when the Museum suddenly had lots of empty space to fill. After enlisting Museum assistance to get him a deferral from active duty (he became a U.S. citizen in 1943), Winternitz began "getting acquainted with the Crosby Brown Collection, taking the instruments out of the basement (storeroom D-26, under the Great Hall), checking on the catalogue, and planning for exhibition, repair, preservation, and courses."<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Memo, Winternitz, "Some Birth and Life Data on the Department of Musical Activities in 1942."



*Whitemarsh Hall, February 1944. The storage here of many of the Museum's collections from late 1941 to early 1944 made possible the expanded musical instrument displays in the Museum building.*

As early as November 1941, he mounted his first small temporary exhibit in the Great Hall—of French chamber-music instruments. For some years thereafter, Winternitz continued to mount small displays in the Great Hall.<sup>178</sup> Most were universally acclaimed, but when the 1670 Todini harpsichord, without its side statues, made an appearance, Taylor queried plaintively: "Can't you do something about the great gilded piano in the front hall? It stands there very much like a lady in her underclothes on the verge of middle age. Can't you at least put it on a platform and bring back the two sculptures that go with it or else remove it entirely? It seems so pointless and naked."<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> *Id.* On St. Patrick's Day 1946, for instance, the Collection's John Egan harp (newly cleaned and discovered to be the maker's first) was displayed in the Great Hall. Egan, a Dublin pedal harp-maker, is considered the father of the modern Irish harp.

<sup>179</sup> Letter, Taylor to Winternitz, February 23, 1943.



*Instruments featured in the Eighteenth Century Chamber Music Group exhibition, photographed November 14, 1941: harpsichord by Couchet (89.44.2363); small harp (89.4.2544); pandora (now deaccessioned); ivory recorder (89.4.909); pochette (89.4.964); viola d'amore (89.4.943); lyra viol(89.4.2227); and treble viol (89.4.946). All these instruments are contemporary with the Watteau painting of the Commedia dell'Arte character Mezzetin.*



*The March 1942 Great Hall exhibition of Renaissance instruments. A harp, lute (89.2.153), theorbo (now deaccessioned), cello, and viola da gamba were shown with the Venetian painting Portrait of a Family (89.4.2742)—all Brown gifts.*

Reinstalling permanent instrument galleries after a decade of neglect took a bit longer. In February 1942 Winternitz informed Taylor tactfully that "the present display [the 1914 installation in the Wing C galleries] is not bad; it is however too complicated and thus confusing for the layman, and as for the scholar, not precise enough and not completely in accord with the recent terminology."<sup>180</sup> He outlined a plan for reorganized installations. In March he was somewhat appalled to discover "various parts and fragments belonging to musical instruments" in the cupboards under the cases, and by June he had spent sufficient time analyzing the collection's parts and fragments, to issue an "S.O. S." to Taylor about the acute need for preservation work.<sup>181</sup> That work began almost immediately, and on February 7, 1943, resulted in

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<sup>180</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Taylor, February 6, 1942. The 1907 gallery photograph reproduced earlier shows exactly what Winternitz meant: each case is completely crammed with objects, and the second tier of cases reaches a height of at least twelve feet.

<sup>181</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Taylor, June 5, 1942. After moving the 421 instruments into the new Morgan Wing display, Winternitz had every case in the Wing C rooms photographed. These 1942 photos are an invaluable record of the collection, as it was some fifty years after its establishment. MM10967, for

the grand opening of three new galleries for European instruments in the Morgan Wing. Galleries F-2-4 had held part of the Morgan Collection until the bombing of Pearl Harbor; 46 new cases now accommodated 421 musical instruments.<sup>182</sup>

The *New York Times* described the new installation as "the transformation of this great body of material from a monument of American collecting to a dynamic presentation of the history of European music."<sup>183</sup> There were "operable action models" for visitors to play, and instruments were "newly strung in the manner of their period." All cases with wood or ivory objects had humidifiers built into the cases (which required constant manual filling).<sup>184</sup> Among the displays was a "complete string quartet" by Antonio Stradivari, lent by Mrs. Herbert Straus.<sup>185</sup> In the old galleries in Wing C, still not open to the public, Winternitz continued to store the remaining instruments: he built new racks and regrouped the instruments based on their sensitivity to temperature and humidity, and installed "a primitive humidification system in the hope of better times."<sup>186</sup> The instruments remained here until 1950, when this space was reassigned to the Department of Decorative Arts, and the instruments went to offsite storage.<sup>187</sup>

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example, shows stringed instruments in room C-26; some strings are broken or missing, and nails and bits of wood lie on the bottom of the case.

<sup>182</sup> See *Guidebook*, 1940; see also *Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (February 1943), inside covers.

<sup>183</sup> *New York Times*, February 7, 1943.

<sup>184</sup> *New York Times*, February 7, 1943; see also Museum press release, same date.

<sup>185</sup> *Violins and Violinists*, Vol. 5, No. 10 (February–March 1944), 398; Memo, Winternitz to Loughry, January 27, 1947. Straus lent three Stradivari and two bows, which were exhibited from February 1943 until February 23, 1944, when they were returned. Shortly thereafter, Straus died.

<sup>186</sup> Winternitz to Taylor, "Report from the Department of Musical Activities for the Year 1943."

<sup>187</sup> See Winternitz to MMA Treasurer Kenneth Loughry, "Report on Departmental Activities," April 1948.



*Gallery F-2 at its 1943 opening. Josephine B. Bowlin, assistant in the Department of Musical Activities, holds a pandora. Three lutes are visible behind in new cases whose lightness and simplicity contrasted with the heavy dark moldings of the 1913 installations.*





*Gallery F-3, photographed at its opening on February 5, 1943. Whenever possible, Winternitz wanted the instruments to be visible from all angles.*

As the *Times* suggested, the 1943 installation underscored the difference between the new curator's philosophy and training and that of his predecessors. The first instrument galleries reflected the Victorian taste for classification and desire to educate through an encyclopedic collection, comprehensively displayed. The displays were not unlike those in the Museum's Egyptian galleries, likewise installed at the turn of the twentieth century, with their cases of hundreds of scarabs or *shawabtis* in rows, for comparison. Mary Elizabeth Brown and curator Frances Morris also expended most time and attention on non-Western instruments, while during his forty-year tenure Winternitz spent more time on Western instruments and on performances using them. His 1943 galleries were only for Western instruments; while there were vague plans for similar non-Western galleries, these did not happen until 1972. But the 1943 galleries, though limited, were exquisite: despite the war, the Museum had scrounged the funds and materials for new cases, designed to facilitate "removal of instruments for demonstration and inspection," one of Winternitz's priorities. The labels included portions of musical scores, and noted the range and timbre of instruments. With the instruments hung reproductions of paintings showing their use.

Showing the instruments' uses was important to Winternitz, who loved music as a performing art, and viewed the collection as part of an aural—not a visual—art form. His repairs were focused on bringing the instruments into playable condition. Today's view of musical instrument collections has shifted away from this attitude, and some practices from the 1930s through the 1950s (e.g., Winternitz's encouragement of visitors trying out the instruments, or Curt Sachs's 1938 replacement of the original but badly deteriorated soundboard of the Cristofori piano with a new one to make it playable) would now be frowned upon.<sup>188</sup> But, Sachs and Winternitz reflected the most eminent scholarly views of the time. Thus Julliard's offer to take over the musical instruments collection from the Museum was made in order to obtain the instruments for use by Julliard students.<sup>189</sup> And there is no doubt that by making the Museum instruments available to players, Winternitz made a material difference to the study of historical performance and early music in this country, and to the performing-arts life of New York. Among many other things, Winternitz welcomed professors and students to the Met to examine and test the instruments. In response to a request from Curt Sachs, who taught at NYU Graduate School and Queens College, to be allowed to teach a class in Winternitz's storerooms, for example, Winternitz wrote: "An invasion of youth into the dusty treasure house of past ages meets with my keenest desires."<sup>190</sup>

In 1961, on the occasion of the largest exhibit the Department of Musical Instruments has ever mounted, Winternitz expanded upon his theory of why the instruments belong in an art museum for John Canaday of the *New York Times*. Winternitz called the instruments "tools," in the same way that medieval chalices and reliquaries, widely appreciated as art objects, are tools:

It is not a matter of discovering a bit of fine carving here, an attractive bit of painting there, but of seeing the beauty of the instrument's total aspect in forms and materials determined by its sonic purpose . . . Dr. Winternitz admits that the soul of the instrument is its sound. Ideally, the exhibited instruments would be accompanied by performers. At second best, punch buttons could turn on appropriate recordings.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> Letter, Sachs to Acting Director Boardman, July 6, 1939. As Sachs stated to the Museum President: "It was necessary to make the restored instruments ready for performance, for that is, of course, the criterion of true reconstruction . . . The first principle in restoring an instrument is to preserve as many parts of the original as possible. No pains have been spared in mending, gluing, ribbing, and studding the innumerable parts worn by age, circumstances, or clumsy repair. Thus it has been possible to preserve all soundboards except that of the Cristofori."

<sup>189</sup> See e.g., letter, 3 June 1954, Carl Anthon (Director, Carl Schurz Foundation) to Winternitz, June 3, 1954: "it is the actual use of ancient instruments which has won countless friends for museums as well as for ancient music."

<sup>190</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Sachs, 2 June 1947. Sachs taught classes at the Met from at least 1942-1947.

<sup>191</sup> "The Glen Collection of Musical Instruments," *Museums Journal*, Vol. 42, March 1943, 280-81. Winternitz's view on the place of music and musical instruments in art museums was not unique. In describing a 1943 exhibition of musical instruments at the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum, the *Museums Journal* noted: "[the curator] holds the view that not merely sculpture and



*Rocco Perino, aged seven, testing a Burmese kyi-waing, a set of gongs, in January 1947 in the old first-floor Wing C galleries. To obtain the instrument, Mary Elizabeth Brown had corresponded extensively with Elizabeth L. Stevens, a missionary in Rangoon in the 1880s whose attitude towards the local orchestras was much more typical of her time and place than Brown's: "to us it is not music but noise," and "I think you can hardly understand why it is that I know so little about the native Burmese music. It is almost wholly connected with their . . . heathenish festival which we discourage our Christians from taking an interest in. . . ."*<sup>192</sup>

Almost immediately after his arrival, Winternitz reversed the Museum's longstanding policy of declining to lend instruments, and offered to make items available to serious performers.<sup>193</sup> Thus, for example, in response to a telephone call from Paul Hindemith at Yale University, Winternitz "hastened to take out of the cases two instruments which might meet your needs . . . the approval of the forms might take 2–3 days so you might count on the arrival of the instruments in the first

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painting but all the fine arts should find a place in a modern art gallery . . . that is why musical recitals have been given within the walls of the Art Gallery . . . one of the first post-war schemes is the establishment of a gallery devoted to instruments of music."

<sup>192</sup> Letters, Stevens to Brown, September 22, 1885; May 22, 1888.

<sup>193</sup> See letter, Winternitz to Hindemith biographer Geoffrey Skelton, 7 January 7, 1974; *New York Herald Tribune*, May 17, 1953.

days of the coming week."<sup>194</sup> Similarly he notified Taylor on October 11, 1949, that he was lending instruments to Leopold Stokowski for the use of the New York Philharmonic. This practice continued through the 1940s and 1950s, but as the century progressed Museum policy concerning loans gradually tightened. Today the Museum occasionally lends instruments, as it does other art, for display in loan exhibitions, but the instruments are no longer lent to be played at non- Museum concerts.<sup>195</sup>



*Winternitz demonstrates a hurdy-gurdy to the Fife and Drum Corps of the Children's Aid Society, 1947.*

Winternitz's arrival, and the change of administrative heart that it represented, were not universally popular. The proponents of the Library/deaccession plan did not readily abandon

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<sup>194</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Hindemith, May 3, 1945. Winternitz's loans to Hindemith were continual: when Hindemith went to Harvard as professor in 1949, Met instruments went with him. See., e.g., Harvard University Department of Music concert program, 31 March 1950, acknowledging instruments from the Met being used in the concert.

<sup>195</sup> E.g., he advised Roland Redmond (MMA President, 1947–64): "a considerable number of ancient instruments from the Crosby Brown collection will be demonstrated during the next few months beginning this Saturday Oct. 10 [1953], in a series of concerts by the New York Philharmonic . . . at Town Hall and Carnegie Hall. The concerts, including our demonstrations, will be broadcast. . ."

their goal, but gradually the Museum saw that the Collection could be an asset. Winternitz made his position clear from the start by telling his counterpart at the New York Public Library (and friend since his arrival in New York), Carleton Sprague Smith: "the next time you enter our musical cemetery [the long-shuttered Wing C instrument galleries] even more re-enlivened corpses and anyway a better order will greet you."<sup>196</sup> New displays, lectures and concerts, and Taylor's support, made it less and less likely that the Museum could quietly get rid of the instruments. But for twenty-five years Winternitz fended off inquiries from Museum administrators about the possibility of merging with a music library, or removing the collection from the Museum.<sup>197</sup> After the debate was effectively over and the instruments had an endowed permanent home in the André Mertens Galleries, the Museum's 1972 guidebook noted honestly that from 1941 to 1961 the instruments had been used in concerts "arranged by the curator," but that the Collection itself had not been shown comprehensively because "the acceptance of music into an art museum was for a long time a contested question."

Winternitz also reversed the Museum's decade-old ban on new instrument acquisitions. The purchasing moratorium continued during the war: only a handful of new instruments were acquired between 1934 and 1945, all gifts. As soon as the war was over, however, Winternitz accepted several significant loans and gifts, notably in 1946, when Alice Getty donated eighty-two instruments, "most of them from India, many of them rare, and all of them in an excellent state of preservation."<sup>198</sup> In that year, too, with the war officially over, he successfully recommended the purchase of a nineteenth-century French hurdy-gurdy (46.83), on display as a loan, which the owner was "forced to sell."<sup>199</sup> Although as late as June 1946 Francis Taylor refused to allow new instrument purchases, shortly afterwards the ban was effectively lifted.

Acquisitions continued apace after the war and included many significant objects. When modest funds for purchases became available, Winternitz bought, for \$2,000, a beautiful spinet, made in 1540 for the Duchess of Urbino. He used this when he appeared on the *Dick Cavett Show* to describe the Collection in 1972. Sadly, other potential acquisitions had to be refused: the

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<sup>196</sup> Letter, 24 Aug. 1942.

<sup>197</sup> *New York Times*, June 30, 1959; minutes, Executive Committee, June 13, 1961. In 1959, following three decades of effort, came the announcement of a music and performing arts library at Lincoln Center, to be directed by the New York Public Library. The announcement said "it now appears unlikely" that the Museum would transfer its musical instruments there." But in 1961, Museum Director Rorimer brought the matter up with the Museum's executive committee and "expressed the hope that a decision might be made . . . regarding the ultimate disposition of those instruments that are not works of art in themselves."

<sup>198</sup> 1946 Museum Annual Report, 24. Getty, a self-taught but respected scholar of Buddhist iconography as well as music, was the only child of a successful Michigan lumberman who retired young with the express intent of seeing the world. She and her father made three trips to Asia before World War I, and her father put together the fine collection of instruments that she presented to the Museum the year before her death. Of the eighty-two "extremely rare" items in the collection for which Winternitz recommended Museum acceptance, most were from India but others were from Africa, Java, Japan, Laos, and Europe.

<sup>199</sup> Memo to Executive Committee from John Phillips (Associate Curator, Renaissance and Modern Art), April 26, 1946. Because Musical Instruments was not yet a formal curatorial department, the purchase was made with funds from the Department of Renaissance and Modern Art.

celebrated author and diplomat, Dr. Robert van Gulik, offered a Ming dynasty lute built by Prince Lu, which Winternitz regretfully had to decline.<sup>200</sup>



*Spinnet, 1540. Venice, Italy. Wood, parchment, ivory. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1953 (53.6 a, b).*

Judge Irwin Untermyer donated a *mandora* dating from about 1420—one of the earliest stringed instruments known, and one of only three surviving instruments of this type (64.101.1409). Untermyer, a knowledgeable collector whose interests ranged from porcelain to gold, was a Museum benefactor from the 1930s until his death in 1973. And, although Winternitz himself was most at ease with Western European instruments and music, he did not neglect the non-Western canon. He himself was an early member of the Ethnomusicological Society<sup>201</sup>, and among his more interesting Asian acquisitions in these years were an ivory *pi'pa*, bequeathed by Mary Harkness in 1950 and originally described at the Museum as a "banjo," and a large Han dynasty bronze drum, the gift of the Laotian Minister of Public Health, Dr. Thongpet Phetisireng, in 1966. Winternitz also planned an exhibition of oriental instruments ("visual knock-outs") in 1952; ultimately this became part of his encyclopedic 1961 exhibition, *Musical Instruments of Five Continents*.

Winternitz's hard work to save the musical instruments for the Museum seemed on the point of fruition when the war was over. Director Taylor announced a grand plan for the modernization of the Museum in the winter of 1945–6; it included a new auditorium and a two-floor suite for the Department, with exhibition space, storage space, offices, repair workshops, tuning space, and demonstration rooms. This plan would have allowed the non-Western instruments to be publicly shown for the first time since the early 1930s.<sup>202</sup> Soon afterwards, in 1949, Winternitz was named full curator, and the Department of Musical Instruments, for the first time ever, was officially a department of the same standing as all other museum curatorial departments.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Letter, Winternitz to van Gulik, march 26, 1948, and preceding correspondence.

<sup>201</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Malcolm Aldrich, May 6, 1964. The current name is Society for Ethnomusicology.

<sup>202</sup> *Musical America*, March 25, 1946, 30.

<sup>203</sup> Museum terminology for the Department varied. Winternitz's Museum business cards were engraved: "Curator of the Musical Collections;" the 1951 Museum bulletins listed the Department simply as "Music".

## Musical Performances During the Winternitz Years



*A 1939 photo of the Alexandria Ballroom, Gallery M-16 in The American Wing, with a harp from the Collection displayed on the musicians' gallery. Dr. Winternitz arranged for concerts to be given from the gallery; one of the first, on November 23, 1942, was a recital by Yella Pessl, for the Bach Circle and the Museum jointly, attended by 279 people.<sup>204</sup>*

In the 1940s and 1950s, it might fairly be said that the Museum's instrument collection was largely a fulcrum for "museum-quality" musical performances. Under Director Taylor, the Department was generally referred to, not as the Department of Musical Instruments, but rather the Department of Music or the Department of Musical Activities, and Taylor encouraged Winternitz to take an expansive view of the Department's role.<sup>205</sup> Winternitz, a skilled player of piano, harpsichord, organ, and a "bit of cello,"<sup>206</sup> did so enthusiastically.

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<sup>204</sup> Winternitz memorandum, February 7, 1944.

<sup>205</sup> See e.g., MMA program for Member Concerts, using both terms, March 11, 1944.

<sup>206</sup> *New York Times*, November 14, 1971.



*1941 concert in the Roman Court, Gallery K-2, in cooperation with the Metropolitan Opera Guild. On this occasion Marjorie Lawrence sang arias from Gluck's *Alceste* accompanied by Stanley Chapple on the Department's Kirkman harpsichord; other performers in this 1941 series were Gian-Carlo Menotti, Sir Thomas Beecham, and Bruno Walter.*

The Museum concerts during these years fell primarily into four categories.<sup>207</sup> First, Winternitz inaugurated non-public, free (with Museum membership) Member Concerts during the winter and spring of 1942. Both to avoid competition with "mainstream" concert halls, and to make known rarely performed musical masterpieces, Winternitz used the Member concerts to

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<sup>207</sup> A few were not easy to classify: for example, in 1950 he inaugurated an annual series of concerts by the popular Old Timers Orchestra, made up of retired former members of the New York Philharmonic and Metropolitan Opera Orchestras. *New Yorker*, Feb. 18, 1950, 59-60.



showcase works that were then little-known.<sup>208</sup> His 1944 Member concert program notes set out his concert philosophy, as well as his concept of one of the Department's major purposes:

How small a fraction of the masterworks of the past is actually known even to the most persistent concert goers . . . to escape this vicious circle is one of the purposes of these concerts. They do not depend upon the box office, but only upon the critical taste of the connoisseurs among our members . . . the Crosby Brown Collection [is] an educational asset of the first order for reviving the music of the past as adequately and as reverently as we moderns can. Thus in some of the concerts the instrument will be the protagonist . . .

The Member concerts initially took place before capacity audiences (capacity was five hundred) on an improvised stage flanked by the Michelangelo slave sculptures in the Morgan Wing (now the Armor Hall), where the new Musical Instrument galleries opened in February 1943.<sup>209</sup> Winternitz stretched fabric across the hall ceiling to help absorb echoes caused by the high vaulting. The following year, the Member concerts series, entitled *Three Centuries of Musical Form*, had 5,646 attendees. In 1945 the concerts began to be given twice each, so as to accommodate more attendees. By 1946 the series attracted 7,552 listeners and had to be transferred to the larger capacity Great Hall.<sup>210</sup> The concerts continued through the 1950s with remarkable performers: Hindemith and the Yale Collegium Musicum,<sup>211</sup> Dame Myra Hess, Isaac Stern, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, to name only a few. Some were recorded: Columbia Records, for instance, sold a twenty-six-disc set of the 1946 Member concerts of Adolph Busch conducting the Handel *Concerti Grossi*.

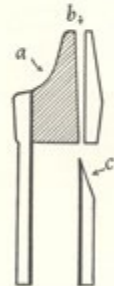
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<sup>208</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Trustee Malcolm Aldrich, January 19, 1959. Rather confusingly, a large number of these concerts were called "Music Forgotten and Remembered," a title Winternitz used repeatedly for concerts and lectures over many decades; many were sold out, even the standing room.

<sup>209</sup> *New York Times*, March 24, 1947, 21; see memo, Taylor to Winternitz, December 20, 1943.

<sup>210</sup> "Annual Report for 1946," 24; minutes, Executive Committee, October 19, 1942; letter, Josephine Bowlin to Winternitz, July 28, 1942. It appears that Member concerts were also held at the elegant George Blumenthal House in the 1940s; trustee Blumenthal left his mansion at Fifth Avenue and 70th Street to the Museum in 1941, and for a year or two it was suggested that the musical instrument collection be housed there. The Museum used the house as regular exhibition gallery space beginning in 1942, but the house was demolished in 1948.

<sup>211</sup> See review in *Musical America*, June 1951.

PROGRAM		PROGRAM NOTES	
<p style="text-align: center;">Alfred Mann, recorder                          Lois Wann, oboe Mildred Hunt Wummer, flute                  Marian Head, violin Hermann Chessid, harpsichord</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I</p> <p>Sonata in C minor for recorder, oboe, and continuo                          GEORG PHILIPP TELEMANN (1681-1767)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Largo Vivace Andante Allegro                          Mr. Mann, Miss Wann, Mr. Chessid</p> <p style="text-align: center;">II</p> <p>Sonata in E minor for flute and continuo                          GEORGE FREDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Grave Allegro Adagio Allegro                          Mrs. Wummer, Mr. Chessid</p> <p style="text-align: center;">III</p> <p>Sonata in C major for recorder, flute, and continuo                          JOHANN JOACHIM QUANTZ (1697-1773)</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Affettuoso Alta brevis Larghetto Vivace                          Mr. Mann, Mrs. Wummer, Mr. Chessid</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">INTERMISSION</p>	<p><b>THE RECORDER</b></p> <p><i>"Will you play upon this pipe? 'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music."</i> HAMLET, ACT III, SCENE 2</p> <p>The recorder is by far the older of the two, at least as an art instrument; it can be traced in pictorial representations as far back as the eleventh century, and it already enjoyed a high reputation among the rich instrumentalists of the early Renaissance when the transverse flute in the form of the "Swiss fife" was still in a more primitive stage, accompanying, with its shrill and shrieking voice, the marching steps of foot soldiers in virtually all European armies.</p> <p>The recorder is a vertical flute with six finger holes in front and a thumb hole at the back. Its most interesting feature is the construction of its mouthpiece. A plug, called the "fipple," stops the bore of the tube at its upper end, leaving only a small channel, or wind way, known as the "flue." Through this the air stream strikes against the sharp edge, or "lip," of the "mouth" cut into the side of the tube. The player's breath striking the "lip" sets into vibration the air column enclosed in the tube.</p> <p>The mouthpiece of such fipple flutes permits only an indirect control of tone production. The lips of the player do not touch the mouth hole of the instrument, as is the case with the transverse</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">  <p style="font-size: small;">Cross section of the head of a recorder: (a) fipple; (b) flue; (c) lip</p> </div>		

Program notes for the April 23, 1952, Members concert, with Winternitz's diagram of a recorder.

For the Member concerts Winternitz always delivered pre-concert lectures, which he illustrated by playing the piano; he also prepared scholarly program notes that remain masterpieces in the field, and which were much in demand—the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the New York Public Library, among others, requested copies for their permanent files.<sup>212</sup> The critical response to the concerts was also highly laudatory. Toscanini and Bruno Walter were among those who attended and were impressed.<sup>213</sup> Many of the concerts were so popular that they were repeated, some more than once.<sup>214</sup>

Second, through 1947 David Mannes conducted free symphony concerts as he had since 1918, though they changed to afternoons, in the Morgan Wing, beginning in 1942—both to save costs associated with evening openings, and as a result of wartime "dimout" regulations. Winternitz

<sup>212</sup> See, e.g., *New York Herald Tribune*, October 15, 1944, "The Program Note," by Virgil Thomson, describing Winternitz's notes as "genuinely informative and gracefully composed . . . the work of a scholar, worth reading and worth keeping."

<sup>213</sup> See memo, Winternitz to Kenneth Lowry, attaching "Report of Departmental Activities," April 23, 1948.

<sup>214</sup> See e., g., letter, Winternitz to Redmond, May 29, 1952.

was responsible for all logistics for the Mannes concerts, including budgeting for them as part of his department.<sup>215</sup>

Third, also in 1942, under Winternitz's direction with assistance from Julliard, the Museum began offering free Sunday-afternoon "Victory" concerts, modeled on those of Dame Myra Hess in London.<sup>216</sup> These also were held in the Morgan Wing; two performances of each Victory concert generally took place, one at the Museum and one at the New York Public Library.

And finally, in addition to the Members-only concerts<sup>217</sup> and the public and Victory concerts, Winternitz organized a subscription concert series generally of four concerts per year, held in the Museum's McKim, Mead-designed lecture hall (predecessor to, and located in the same place as, the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium; it had a capacity of about four hundred). These were the only Museum concerts for which there was a charge, and, like the Member concerts, they were of a remarkable musical quality.<sup>218</sup> Initially private donations, many solicited by Winternitz, funded these; ticket sales were viewed as rather incidental. The Museum allotted Winternitz a small budget to pay honoraria for these concerts: \$8000 per year in the early 1950s covered performers like the Dessoff Choirs (\$1200 to perform on January 21, 1953), Ralph Kirkpatrick (\$700 for two performances on February 11 and 13 1952), and Paul Hindemith and the Yale Collegium Musicum (\$2500 for one concert May 18, 1953).

Winternitz thus produced almost all Museum concerts for eighteen years. After the war, partly owing to the concerts' great success, Director Taylor's plans for the reorganization of the Museum included a much larger concert hall. Winternitz communicated directly with the architects to assure appropriate acoustics for the types of concerts envisioned. He also determined the requirements for administering the auditorium.<sup>219</sup>

The advent of the "acoustically perfect" 750-person Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium in 1954 turned out to be a mixed blessing for Winternitz's approach to Museum concerts. The new auditorium had a Rieger pipe organ onstage built to Baroque specifications,<sup>220</sup> and made

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<sup>215</sup> See, e.g., letter, Taylor to Winternitz, December 19, 1944, enclosing approved budget. In 1949 Winternitz scheduled two free public concerts in the Great Hall, in an attempt to revive the free symphony concept, which had ended after Mannes' 1947 retirement. The concerts attracted audiences of over 10,000, but the experiment was not repeated.

<sup>216</sup> Annual Reports for 1942, 1943. Victory concert attendance was over 60,000 in 1942, and 72, 249 in 1943; Mannes concert attendance was over 27,000 in those years.

<sup>217</sup> Winternitz memo, February 7, 1944. A member of the Bach Circle, Winternitz also arranged for that group's concerts to take place in the Morgan Wing; the May 25, 1942, concert was attended by 775 people.

<sup>218</sup> E.g., Mieszyslaw Horszowski played the Cristofori on March 3, 1952 (repeated March 10); see *New York Herald Tribune*, March 4, 1952. Horszowski, a close friend of Winternitz's, played at the Museum dozens of times over three decades.

<sup>219</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Stephen Voorhees, June 10, 1952; memo, Winternitz to Taylor, February 8, 1954.

<sup>220</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Taylor, November 1, 1954; *New York Times*, May 16, 1954; *Bulletin, New Series*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (October 1966), 70–71. This original 1,200-pipe Rieger organ, affectionately known as the "Bulldozer," was replaced by an even larger 1,540-pipe Holtkamp organ, donated anonymously and

possible a large number of concerts in excellent surroundings, but it also caused the Museum to view concerts as a potential source of revenue. In the year of the new auditorium's opening, Winternitz oversaw a concert budget of \$19,500 for 15 concerts, but after Taylor left the Museum, the Taylor/Winternitz approach to Museum concerts, which the *New York Times* had praised as "entirely non-commercial"<sup>221</sup> changed. In 1957 the Museum created a separate Department of Auditorium Activities (now Concerts and Lectures) with a popular-entertainment as well as a professional musical focus. Winternitz was not amused that "fashion shows and Garden Club meetings" had been allowed to invade his auditorium,<sup>222</sup> although he continued to have responsibility for organizing many concerts at the Museum for years to come—notably including yet another series which began with a single concert in 1956 sponsored by Alice Tully and conducted by his old friend from Vienna, Frederic Waldman. Tully, a great supporter of Waldman, who had been her piano teacher, persuaded Winternitz to expand this single performance to a series, and to lecture in accompaniment of each concert. The Waldman concerts were performed at the Museum again from 1957 to 1960 under the name "Music Forgotten and Remembered"; Waldman then changed the name of his orchestra to *Musica Aeterna*, and the Waldman/*Musica Aeterna* concerts at the Museum became so popular that they were repeated at Carnegie Hall, and later at Alice Tully Hall, but they continued at the Museum into the mid-1980s, when Waldman retired. The Waldman concerts thus rival the Mannes concerts as the Museum's longest-running concert series.<sup>223</sup>

Perhaps the musical high points of Winternitz's concert programming resulted from his close relationship with the Yale School of Music. The composer and conductor Paul Hindemith—who, like Winternitz, had fled the Nazis—taught at Yale from 1940 to 1953; he and Winternitz met in 1943, and they shared an office when Winternitz served as visiting professor of Music at Yale beginning in 1949.<sup>224</sup> Winternitz was aware that Hindemith had helped to found, in 1941, the Yale Collegium Musicum, a leading exponent of the early music movement.<sup>225</sup> At that same time, Winternitz was repairing the European instruments specifically to make them "playable," but as he later recalled, his efforts were being hampered because he had no access to players with the time or inclination to undertake the tuning and playing of such antiques. His long association with schools and students made him think that music students might have the necessary time and interest to take proper advantage of the Collection, so he approached Hindemith about having the latter's students play old music on the Museum's historic instruments.<sup>226</sup> Though Yale had and still has a musical instrument collection, the Met's collection is richer in "playable" examples of

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inaugurated on December 18, 1965, with a concert by Winternitz's friend E. Power Biggs. The Holtkamp was considered for removal in 1989 but was left in place.

<sup>221</sup> *New York Times*, May 16, 1954.

<sup>222</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Taylor, November 1, 1954.

<sup>223</sup> *New York Times*, December 5, 1995.

<sup>224</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Redmond, October 31, 1952. Winternitz and Hindemith had an extensive correspondence over many years. Hindemith addressed Winternitz as "Lieber Metropolitan" and Winternitz responded to "Egregio Maestro" or "Maestro dei Maestri."

<sup>225</sup> For a clip of the Collegium Musicum rehearsing for one of these concerts, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mH9LXg-Ajgg>.

<sup>226</sup> See Winternitz, unpublished memoir section, *Hindemith Ludens*.

instrument types appropriate for early-music concerts. Hindemith's enthusiastic response to Winternitz led to extensive long-term loans by the Museum and use by Yale students of Museum instruments,<sup>227</sup> lectures by Winternitz at Yale about the instruments, and historic early-music concerts at Yale and the Museum by the Collegium Musicum from 1945 to 1953 (Hindemith moved permanently to Switzerland in 1953).

On May 20, 1946, for example, Hindemith conducted only the third Collegium Musicum concert, at Yale but using borrowed Department instruments, in imitation of a Memling 1480 painting, *Christ Surrounded by Angels*.<sup>228</sup> Winternitz gave a lecture on the instruments at Yale at the time of the concert. Another concert, in the Medieval Armor Hall, May 27, 1948, was a Member concert, later described by Winternitz as "the most interesting of our concerts of old music"<sup>229</sup>; like several others at the Museum, it was radio broadcast and recorded for reuse by the State Department for the Voice of America. Another, at The Cloisters on June 4, 1951, attracted over two thousand people,<sup>230</sup> despite pouring rain that required the orchestra and audience to get up and move inside, and required Hindemith to conduct from memory as rain washed away the ink on his conductor's score.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> See, e.g., letter, Winternitz to Hindemith, May 3, 1944, asking to what pitch he should tune a "little Regal" [small portable organ] for a performance by Yale students; *Montreal Evening Star*, November 30, 1946. Hindemith used the regal at Yale at least through 1948.

<sup>228</sup> See *Montreal Evening Star*, November 30, 1946; Lecture, "Hindemith's Performances of Old Music" by Howard Boatwright, July 1973, reprinted in *Hindemith-Jahrbuch* III (1973).

<sup>229</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Charles Sterling, Curator of Paintings at the Louvre, March 29, 1950.

<sup>230</sup> See, *Yale Alumni Magazine*, October 1995, "Remembering a Musical Master"; see, e.g., *New York Herald Tribune*, May 17, 1953.

<sup>231</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Roland Redmond, June 7, 1951.



*Paul Hindemith conducting the Yale University Collegium Musicum at The Cloisters museum and gardens, June 4, 1951.*

At the final Hindemith-led Museum concert, in the Great Hall on May 18, 1953, Hindemith himself played Museum instruments.<sup>232</sup> Even after Hindemith's departure, Yale groups performed at the Museum.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Phillip Vaudrin, Trade Editor of the Oxford University Press, May 13, 1953.

<sup>233</sup> See, e.g. Concert given by the Yale Collegium Musicum at the Museum April 25, 2006; see also Museum press release May 5, 1957.

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Concert for the General Membership



ELEVENTH YEAR

*Program of  
Vocal and Instrumental Music from  
Perotin to Johann Sebastian Bach*

YALE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MUSIC

COLLEGIUM MUSICUM

*Paul Hindemith, Director*

MONDAY, MAY 18, 1953 AT 8:30 IN THE GREAT HALL

*Program cover for the May 18, 1953, Concert for the General Membership.*



*Hindemith and the Yale Collegium Musicum rehearsing in the Arms and Armor Court before their concert in May 1948. The seldom-heard early instruments are labeled "shawm," "krumhorn," etc. for the benefit of the audience.*

Both laypeople and musicians welcomed the Department's concert programming with enthusiasm. Department files are filled with laudatory letters, and the press coverage was uniformly positive. There were other concrete benefits to the Museum as a result of the concerts. The Brown family commitment to the Department, attenuated since the death of William Adams Brown, revived when Thatcher M. Brown, son of Mary Elizabeth Brown and brother of William



Adams Brown, attended concerts organized by Winternitz and wrote to express his pleasure.<sup>234</sup> Even more importantly, in 1955, George Gould donated a third Stradivarius violin, "unsolicited and unexpectedly, as a recognition of the concerts of old music which the donor had heard here in recent years."<sup>235</sup> Winternitz advocated strongly for the acceptance of this gift over the objections of some performers and dealers who feared that fine instruments would become less and less available to active musicians if they were behind glass in museums:

Privately owned instruments, except those kept in vaults as investments, are perpetually exposed to hazards of travel, change of climate, scratching of surface, spoiling of varnish by rosin, tension by metal strings which were never envisioned by the Cremonese masters, etc. The number of master fiddles shrinks from generation to generation. . . . There is of course no objection to occasional or periodical playing of the instruments by expert performers in the museum under appropriate conditions.<sup>236</sup>

This exposition neatly encapsulates the philosophy behind the Department's existence in the Museum.



*Antonio Stradivari (Italian, 1644–1737). "The Gould" Violin, 1693. Cremona, Italy. Maple, spruce, ebony. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of George Gould, 1955 (55.86 a-c).*

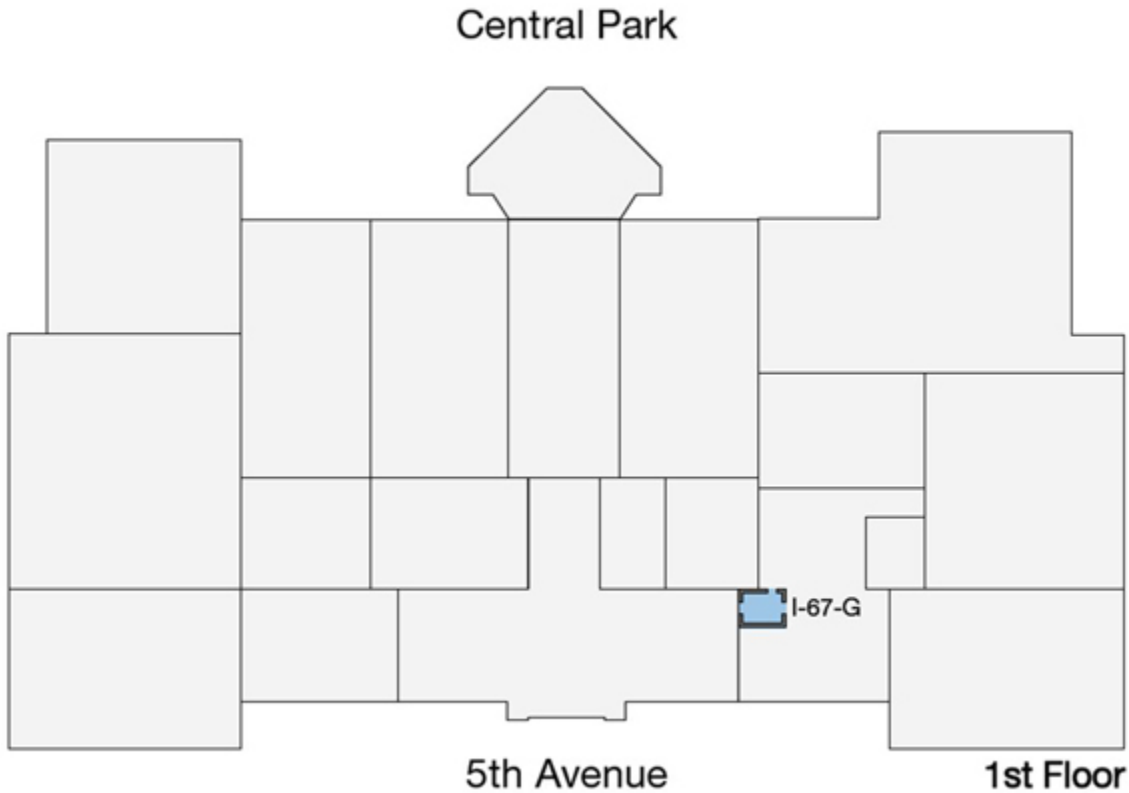
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<sup>234</sup> Letter, Thatcher Brown to Taylor, June 3, 1953.

<sup>235</sup> Memo, Winternitz to Rorimer, May 4, 1955. In the 1970s this violin was restored in Amsterdam to its original Baroque form. Today it is the only Stradivarius violin known to exist in its original form and is of great interest to performers for that reason.

<sup>236</sup> Memo, Winternitz to Rorimer, May 4, 1955.

## 1950–1969: The "Orphan Department"<sup>237</sup>



### *Musical Instruments Gallery Spaces, 1953–70*

Musical Instruments' place in the Museum had seemed assured in 1949, with Winternitz a full curator and plans published for suitable Department-rank offices and exhibition space. But the new Department's fortunes quickly went into reverse. First, when the Museum began to implement Taylor's post-war construction projects in 1950, the old Wing C galleries—closed to the public for almost twenty years and still containing the majority of the Collection—were emptied and turned over to another department. As a result, hundreds of instruments which had

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<sup>237</sup> Letter, Redmond to Aldrich, February 25, 1954: "I cannot thank you enough for taking this orphan department under your wing." The Museum assigns to each curatorial department a Visiting Trustee to be liaison to the Board. Redmond himself held the position in 1953, but lost no time in turning over to Aldrich responsibility for the "Music Department and the [Grace Rainey Rogers] Auditorium." Letters, Dudley Easby (Museum Secretary, 1945–69) to Aldrich, January 28, 1954; Winternitz to Redmond, February 17, 1953.

been at the Museum since the nineteenth century moved to offsite warehouse storage.<sup>238</sup> Winternitz had every reason to believe that when they came back it would be to new, purpose-built galleries, but the Museum's construction plans kept changing. In 1953, with no new galleries in view, a second blow fell when Winternitz was told that the rooms containing his 1943 installation of six hundred European instruments in Wing F would be remodeled as period rooms for the Department of Decorative Arts. More instruments went to offsite storage. Winternitz protested strongly that this action meant his was the only department with no exhibition space at all—to no avail.<sup>239</sup>

During these years the Museum's intent for the Department was not clear, and must have been a source of immense frustration for the curator. Construction, renovation, and reorganization plans were revised frequently from 1946 on, and as late as January 1954—only four months before the opening of the new auditorium—Director Taylor published blueprints that showed the entire ground floor of Wing D assigned to Musical Instruments. But, in June 1955, Taylor resigned and the Department lost its most powerful supporter.<sup>240</sup> The Department of Musical Instruments was temporarily placated with the assignment of one permanent 1,250-square-foot exhibition gallery in Wing E,<sup>241</sup> and a mezzanine-level one-room office of 420 square feet, to house all members of the departmental staff. Winternitz was also invited to mount a temporary exhibit, the Baroque Orchestra, for a few months in 1954 (later extended to 1956), across from the auditorium. Adequate permanent exhibition space continued to be promised and the press kept up the demands, but the promises grew fewer with the years.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> See packing slips dated 1950–51. During World War II, the Museum also induced the City to convert the thirty-foot diameter water main below the basement into eighteen numbered storage rooms, one of which was assigned to Musical Instruments. Some displays from the Brown-era galleries were placed in this "tunnel" space and forgotten for fifty years. Early in this century the tunnel was exhumed; among other things, Brown's Steinway piano models were recovered, cleaned, and made available for display once again.

<sup>239</sup> See e.g., Letters, Winternitz to Taylor, April 24 and October 5, 1953.

<sup>240</sup> Letter, Winternitz to William Ivins (Curator of Prints until his retirement in 1946; Acting Director, 1938–40), March 18, 1955. "I am in the midst of moving the 4,000 god-forsaken instruments into new quarters, with the usual rush, and I am also mentally affected by the nervous atmosphere of the interregnum [between Taylor's resignation and the announcement of a new director, who proved to be James Rorimer]."

<sup>241</sup> Memo, Winternitz to Taylor, March 8, 1954. The new gallery was first denominated E-5-B, and in the Museum's 1964 renumbering plan was known as 1-67-G. It is now the first gallery in the Egyptian collection enfilade leading up to the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium. This room held about 1.5 percent of the collection—for most of the period 1956–64, there was a small display of Hindu instruments and one of European instruments. The single 420-square-foot office held the entire Department staff until May 1966, when the offices were relocated.

<sup>242</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Aldrich, March 20, 1963. Thus in 1963 Winternitz was told by Director Rorimer, who was not unsympathetic, that Musical Instruments had been assigned five thousand square feet for new galleries in "a sequence of rooms and corridors extending from the Park side east toward the center of the building." *New York Times*, June 25, 1961: "With 4,000 specimens in storage, the Metropolitan is one of the best museums of musical instruments in the world, and certainly the best concealed." See also Winternitz's pointed comment in the *Bulletin, New Series*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (October 1963), 77: "The



*Winternitz (right) with his closest colleague at the Museum, Dr. Olga Raggio, curator of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts. After his death Dr. Raggio preserved his papers for twenty-five years.*

In 1955 Winternitz was cheered to learn that the entire Collection was coming back from the warehouse to the Museum, but his hopes were quickly dashed when he learned that he was not being given any space at all to display the Collection. Instead, the boxes from the warehouse had to be stacked inside and in the hall outside the Department's only remaining space—not a gallery, but a 1,700-square-foot basement "study area" (G-72-J), under the auditorium.<sup>243</sup> This room was designed and used during the 1940s for easy access by students and scholars to instruments not on exhibition. (The Museum had several such study rooms in other departments.)

For the next two decades the Department's future was uncertain, though in contrast to the 1930s, curatorial work continued and the staff actually grew during this period. Winternitz received authorization in 1959 to hire a full-time conservator—Edward M. Ripin, a distinguished organologist and contributor to *Grove's Dictionary of Music*, who later served as assistant curator

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Department, whose exhibition galleries were closed because of the rebuilding around the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, gave much time to preparing plans for a permanent display of a large part of the Crosby Brown Collection of musical instruments, which is to be exhibited in new galleries assigned to us for the future."

<sup>243</sup> Memo, Winternitz to Rorimer, November 26, 1958. At the end of 1958, crates of instruments from Manhattan Warehouse were still stored, unopened because there was no space to open them, on iron racks in Room G-75-K, outside the Department storeroom.

in the Department. Sidney Greenstein joined as senior restorer in 1964.<sup>244</sup> However, as Thomas Hoving, Museum director from 1967 to 1977, said, "Musical Instruments was held in the least regard of any department in the Museum."<sup>245</sup> Indeed, in 1964, the Department lost its single permanent gallery.<sup>246</sup> Thereafter, the Collection was entirely in storage, in the study room under the auditorium, and in basement rooms G-70-K and G-54-T, except to the extent that period rooms included an instrument or two.<sup>247</sup>

The bright spots—and they were exceedingly bright—during these "orphan" years were publications, performances, lectures, and temporary exhibits.<sup>248</sup> By keeping the Museum's profile active in the music world, Winternitz made it impossible for anyone to forget that the Museum had a great, if hidden, instrument collection. He made the Museum a venue for adventurous concerts and lectures, and his personal relationship with performers, scholars, composers, and conductors ensured a constant stream of notable talent appearing at the Museum—always with instruments from the Collection.<sup>249</sup> He also continued generous loans of the instruments to other institutions, for playing more than display. A February 2, 1950, note from Leopold Stokowski was typical: Stokowski and the Principal Trumpet of the New York Philharmonic wanted to

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<sup>244</sup> Ripin's detailed and precise studies of keyboard instruments remain seminal in the field. He left the Museum and began an academic career in 1973, when Laurence Libin succeeded Winternitz as curator.

<sup>245</sup> Thomas Hoving, *Making the Mummies Dance*, 71.

<sup>246</sup> See Memo, Winternitz to Rorimer, July 1, 1965.

<sup>247</sup> *Bulletin*, Vol. 12, No. 5, January 1954, 113. The Todini harpsichord, still the largest example of Roman Baroque art in the Museum and always a display favorite owing to its decorative nature, was in demand even when the instruments had no permanent galleries: In 1953 it migrated to the newly renovated paintings galleries in Wing K.

<sup>248</sup> Although Winternitz's publications were not limited to topics related to the Collection, they enhanced the Department's renown, even as his position at the Museum gave him access and credibility among those he did not know personally. He began publishing articles in English on art and music in the 1940s, and in the 1950s had the time to begin publishing scholarly monographs. He wrote often on the musical instruments he knew best, for example in *Keyboard Instruments in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (1961) and *Die Schönsten Musikinstrumente des Abendlandes* (1966, English edition 1967). But his seminal work was undoubtedly *Musical Instruments and Their Symbolism in Western Art*, which described the new field of musical iconography—a field that did not exist before Winternitz. His last years were largely devoted to a study of the connection between Leonardo da Vinci's art and his music, and resulted in *Leonardo da Vinci as a Musician* (1982).

<sup>249</sup> Memo, Winternitz to Kenneth Loughry, April 23, 1948; memo, Winternitz to Rorimer, November 16, 1955. Winternitz contributed to the continuing high profile of the Department by teaching and writing: he taught graduate courses for the Columbia University Faculty of Philosophy in 1947–48 in the Museum galleries (Columbia's course description noted that "numerous instruments and action models will be demonstrated"); at the Yale School of Music from 1949 to 1960, where he taught about thirty class sessions a year, mostly on Saturdays in the Museum storerooms or galleries; at Rutgers (1961–65); and at the City University of New York (1971–83). The State Department called on him to lecture for the Voice of America repeatedly, for years. As well as writing, in 1971, Winternitz was one of the founders of Répertoire International d'Iconographie Musicale (RIdIM), an international endeavor for cataloguing art objects representing musical scenes and instruments, and the following year was instrumental in founding CUNY's Research Center for Music Iconography (RCMI). Winternitz gave his musical iconography photo archive to RCMI, and after Winternitz's death his nephew, George Weinwurm, donated more of his uncle's papers to RCMI.

come by and play some of the Collection trumpets; Winternitz obliged, of course. Winternitz's other professional engagements also kept the Museum in the public eye: he was a founding member of CIMCIM, the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Musical Instruments (a committee of the International Committee of Museums) and served as its Vice-President and then President from 1959-1968. Many of Winternitz's publications were scholarly books not directly connected to the Museum, but in 1961 he published *Keyboard Instruments at the Metropolitan Museum*, a reminder of many treasures not on display.

The temporary exhibitions during these years were equally notable. The first, *Music of the Baroque*, opened on May 12, 1954, to celebrate the inauguration of the new auditorium. It showed 150 Western instruments, and Winternitz no doubt agreed with the universally favorable press coverage, much of which noted the failure of the Museum to include the promised instrument exhibition galleries with the auditorium. (In 1956 this exhibit was dismantled to make way for the Vanderlyn panorama.) In 1959 he mounted a small exhibition for the bicentennial of Handel's death, and on June 20, 1961, opened the largest exhibition of musical instruments ever shown in America; it remains the largest temporary exhibition the Department has ever handled. Titled *Musical Instruments of Five Continents*, it filled the Museum's special-exhibition galleries on the second floor of Wing K (the site of the present Islamic galleries); the exhibit closed after ten weeks, but reopened that winter for several months by popular demand, and resulted in Winternitz giving two popular radio lectures in August 1961 on "Instruments Old and New," as well as much press in publications like *Time* and *Newsweek*. The Museum had the grace to acknowledge, in the press release announcing the exhibition, that the collection "has remained in the Museum's storerooms due to lack of exhibit space" and was accordingly "almost unknown to the general public."



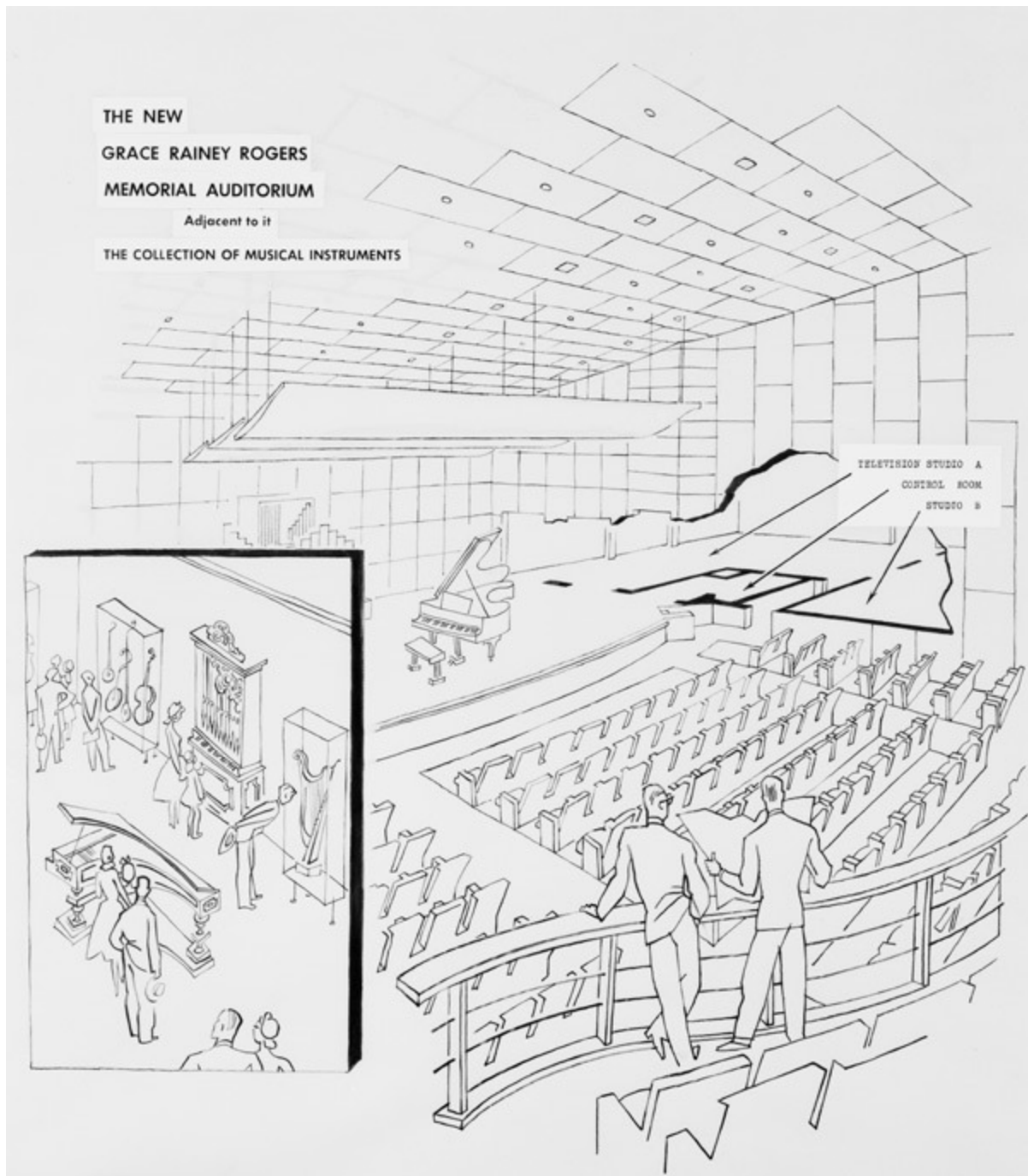
*The magisterial exhibition Musical Instruments of Five Continents, photographed June 1961.*

The Department did not again mount a temporary exhibit until October 1967, when *Pleasing to the Eye and Ear Alike*, a modest display of sixty-seven instruments, was shown in the Medieval Sculpture Hall for less than a month. Concerts were given at fifteen-minute intervals from the balcony overlooking the Hall. The *New York Times* noted censoriously that it was the first time since 1961 that any of the Department's four thousand instruments had been seen in public.<sup>250</sup> But the small display served a large purpose—showcasing a few collection items, in the hope of a longterm benefit.<sup>251</sup> It worked.

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<sup>250</sup> *New York Times*, October 3, 1967; *Newark Star Ledger*, same date; see also Museum press release September 20, 1967.

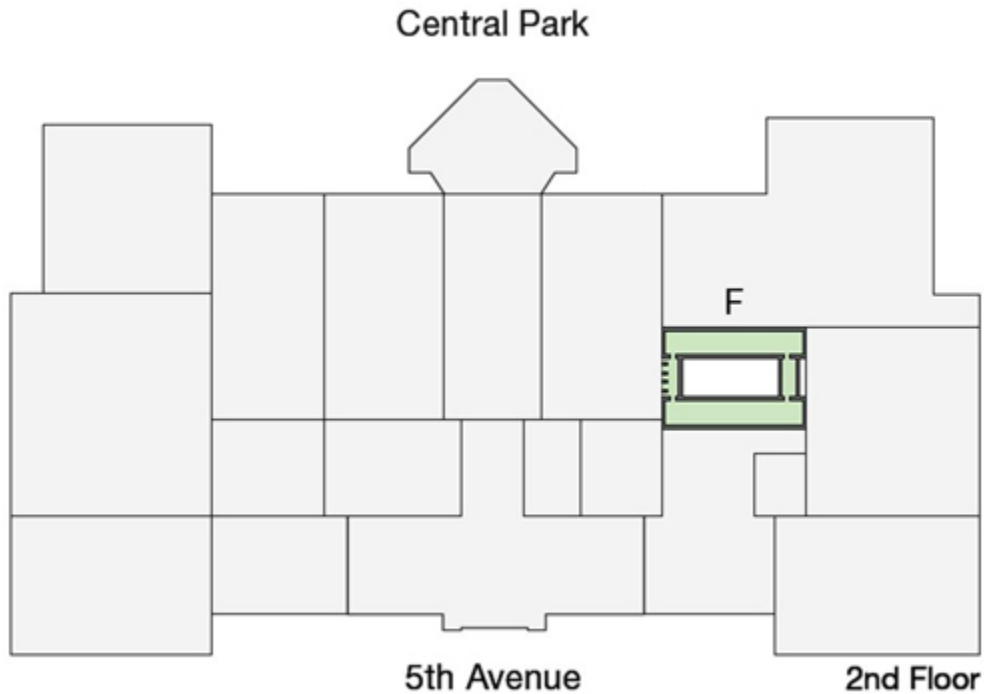
<sup>251</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Brooke Astor, March 7, 1968. Brooke Astor, then only three years into her forty-five-year trusteeship at the Museum, underwrote concerts given in connection with this small exhibition.



*Drawing of the new auditorium, "adjacent to . . . the Collection of Musical Instruments," as published by the Museum in the January 1954 Bulletin.*



## 1969–Present: The Department Assured



### *Musical Instruments Gallery Spaces, 1971–present.*

December 11, 1969, was a happy day for the Department. Nearly thirty years after his arrival at the Museum, Winternitz presided over the formal dedication (construction would come later) of the space earmarked for permanent instrument galleries. Formerly part of European Paintings, rooms F-12–25 on the second floor of the Morgan Wing made a narrow rectangle overlooking the Armor Court, directly above the space which had held the 1943 Musical Instrument galleries.

The new galleries came about because of a challenge issued by Thomas Hoving when he became director in 1967. Hoving informed Winternitz bluntly that the latter's only hope of getting permanent galleries was to find a donor to underwrite them to the tune of at least \$1 million. As Hoving later recounted, Winternitz did exactly that—in only a few months.



*Restorer Sidney Greenstein preparing instruments to be displayed for the first time in twenty—and in some cases forty—years, in the new André Mertens Galleries for Musical Instruments, 1972.*

The donor was Clara Mertens, widow of André Mertens, a German refugee music impresario. By the end of 1967—after the small exhibition in the Medieval Sculpture Hall—she had agreed in principle to the donation; negotiating the terms and the location for the galleries took two more years.<sup>252</sup> At the dedication, held in the bare unrenovated space, there was a model of how the finished galleries would look, and Winternitz demonstrated the playing of eight different keyboards from the Collection as well as some South American whistling pots and North American rattles.<sup>253</sup> Planning and construction took two more years, much of it consumed by the need to seal exterior windows and install air conditioning in this section of the Museum for the

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<sup>252</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Taylor, June 9, 1953. The Brown family had minimal involvement with the Museum for two or more decades after William Adams Brown died in 1943. (Among the limited family contacts in those years was Alexander Crosby Brown, son of James Crosby Brown, and grandson of Mary Elizabeth Brown, who donated a Polynesian drum in 1949. Letter, Winternitz to Taylor, October 5, 1953. Signs in the new galleries continued to identify the "Crosby Brown Collection" of instruments, but no one in the Brown family objected to the naming of the Mertens Galleries.

<sup>253</sup> *New York Times*, December 12, 1969; Museum Press Release, December 12, 1969.

first time, but all was finally ready for the grand opening on November 17, 1971. Guests were played in by bagpipers, and there was a recital on the Kirkman harpsichord.<sup>254</sup> The new space, previously an enfilade of thirteen small rooms, had been opened into two long galleries—one for European, and the other for non-European instruments, with open balconies at each end overlooking the Armor Court. The introductory installation, on the entrance balcony leading from the Department of European Paintings, was a case of brass instruments from many cultures, flanked by European, Karen and slit drums, and a “jingling johnny.” Almost a quarter of the collection—eight hundred instruments—could be shown at any one time. For the first time both temperature (sixty-eight degrees) and humidity (fifty percent) were maintained automatically. The new galleries were also set up for the Museum's first audio guide, a tape-recorded Telesonic system that let gallery visitors hear the instruments on view when they walked up close enough to the case to be within range of the broadcast. The audio guide rented in the gallery for fifty cents, a sum Winternitz, the narrator, described as a bargain.

In some respects, the new gallery displays more closely resembled the Morris/Brown installations than they did the Winternitz 1943 arrangements. Most notably, of course, the same space was given to non-Western and Western instruments. The cases were also not intended, as the 1943 ones had been, to permit constant use of the instruments. The enormous increase in numbers of visitors to the Museum, coupled with evolution in conservation scholarship, meant that by the 1970s, it was not possible for music classes to meet regularly in the galleries to handle and play the instruments. However, the André Mertens Galleries were designed to permit temporary seating in front of the central keyboard platform, so that the instruments in playing condition could be used for small gallery concerts.

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<sup>254</sup> For the opening, Winternitz arranged both a concert and lecture series: the concerts included Horszowski on the Cristofori; the New York Pro Musica; Sonya Monosoff and Stoddard Lincoln playing the Department's Stradivarius violins, and Julian Bream on lute. The lecture series, entitled "Tools of Music," included sessions on "Musical Instrument Collections as Guide for Historians and Performers"; "Forgeries and Fakes"; "Pleasing to the Eye and Ear Alike"; "Baroque Orchestration and J.S. Bach"; "Tone and Color in the Works of the Russian School"; "Collections of Musical Instruments from Ancient World to Baroque"; "The Musical Instruments of Mozart"; and "Musical Instruments in the Work of Lully, Rameau, and Charpentier."



*The André Mertens Galleries for Musical Instruments at their opening. The spare, modernist aesthetic was a good foil for the Museum's first permanent display of non-Western instruments (here, China and Japan) in forty years. The Japanese gong carried by oni (89.4.2016) in the foreground was the very "three-toed" sculpture so derided in the 1940 New Yorker article. Mary Elizabeth Adams Brown paid fifty-five yen for the gong in 1898 after Florence Learned, a missionary in Kyoto, wrote to her about it. The purpose of this gong has never been determined; no similar example appears to exist in Japan, though Learned told Brown about another one that went to Scotland in 1899, and one or two others have been offered for sale in the United States in the past fifty years.*



*Another view of the André Mertens Galleries for Musical Instruments at their opening, 1972. This view shows the "jewel-like" lighting effects that picked each instrument out from the case backgrounds and made the installation unusually attractive.*

With the new galleries came favorable publicity, memorably including Winternitz's performances on the *Today Show* in January 1972, and the *Dick Cavett Show*, which had five million viewers on May 18, 1972. For both shows Winternitz played instruments from the Collection. The Department also became more strongly cemented into the mainstream fabric of the Museum.<sup>255</sup> A Visiting Committee, at first only four people, including Clara Mertens and trustee Malcolm Aldrich, was established in 1969.<sup>256</sup> The Committee soon expanded to include Alice Tully, who made a large donation to help with the new galleries, and soon thereafter, a new Brown family representative: John Crosby Brown Moore, son of the donor of the Zorn portrait of Mary Elizabeth Brown.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Though the Mertens donation was not formally associated with curatorial office space, in 1966, the Department offices moved to Wing Z—a narrow extension erected in 1954 at the north end of the Museum, west of Wing H, to connect the Morgan and North wings. Wing Z was demolished in the mid-1970s to make way for the Temple of Dendur, at which time the Department offices made a final move to their present location in Wing X, a set of rooms built into a courtyard in 1912 to serve as offices for the Museum's first auditorium.

<sup>256</sup> Letter, Winternitz to Hoving, June 13, 1969.

<sup>257</sup> Report, Winternitz to Hoving, July 16, 1971.

In July 1973, with the permanent galleries open, Winternitz retired at the age of 75. For the next ten years, as curator emeritus, he kept a large Museum office, came to work almost every day, and was a member of the Department's Visiting Committee, but he spent most of his time teaching and writing, as well as continuing his involvement with the performing arts—especially the early-music movement. In his Museum office, he taught another generation of young scholars, including the present curator, Ken Moore, who joined the department in 1979.<sup>258</sup>

Upon Winternitz's taking emeritus status, the Museum hired Laurence Libin as Associate Curator in Charge of the Department of Musical Instruments; Libin led the department for more than twenty-five years, until 1999. Libin was a gifted writer who greatly expanded the range of publications available about the Department's collections. He wrote a comprehensive guide, "Musical Instruments in the Metropolitan Museum," in 1978, and updated it frequently; and in 1985, he wrote the more specialized *American Musical Instruments in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, the first work of its kind, followed in 1989 by "Keyboard Instruments in the Metropolitan Museum of Art." In 1998 he brought out a significant revision of his earlier work, *Our Tuneful Heritage: American Musical Instruments in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. This last work followed a major loan exhibition mounted in The American Wing in 1996 entitled *Two Centuries of American Instrument Making in New York*. The show included paintings from the Museum's collections, and featured instruments ranging from the double harp shown here to banjos and music boxes. It represented one of the first scholarly studies of American instrument-making outside of "folk" and popular traditions.

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<sup>258</sup> Memos, Rorimer to Winternitz, December 18, 1963, asking him to continue as curator on a year-by-year basis; letter, Douglas Dillon (Museum President, 1970–77; Chairman, 1978–83) to Winternitz, August 29, 1974; letter, Winternitz to Dillon, September 9, 1974. Winternitz died August 20, 1983, and his memorial service was held at the Museum. Dr. Olga Raggio of the Museum gave the eulogy.



*Two Centuries of Instrument Making in New York, a 1996 exhibition curated by Libin and Moore. Libin was among the first organologists to focus scholarly attention on American "classical"—as opposed to folk or pop—instruments.*

Notable during Libin's tenure were many acquisitions of both Western and non-Western instruments. While at the beginning of Winternitz's curatorship there were only a handful of instruments new to the Collection since the Brown era, by the end of the Libin years, the Brown and Drexel collections represented just over half of the collection. Among Libin's great additions was a 1977 gift from well-known percussionist Carroll Bratman of a fifty-four-piece gamelan made in Java and brought here in 1964 to be played in the Indonesian pavilion at the World's Fair, 1977.<sup>393.1 a-c</sup> Bratman, whose company, Carroll Music, has been a fixture for New York musicians since the 1940s, bought the ensemble when Indonesia left the fair in 1965. Since its acquisition, the gamelan has been on long-term loan to the Cornell University Department of Music, where the pieces can be regularly played by students. Libin made the loan because the gamelan—unlike many Museum instruments—is new, in perfect condition to be played, and offers students a rare opportunity to practice on important instruments not widely available in the West. Displaying the gamelan at the Museum would have both taken a great deal of space (it arrived at the Museum packed in fifty crates), and severely limited the ensemble's accessibility to students and teachers.

Libin also oversaw the 1982 purchase and installation of the Department's Appleton pipe organ on the north balcony, which connected the Western and non-Western Musical Instrument galleries. The Appleton, the oldest and finest extant work of Boston maker Thomas Appleton, had been found in 1980 walled up in a church in Pennsylvania; as a result it had been little altered since its completion in 1830. Today it is used for concerts, including a 2012 performance

celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of its installation with the premiere of a new work by Robert Sirota, commissioned for the instrument.



*The Appleton pipe organ in 1982, being removed from the church where it was discovered. Boxes of organ pipes lie across the church pews.*



Shortly after buying the Appleton, Libin presided over the presentation by Andres Segovia of two of his guitars as gifts for the permanent collection. Segovia, who had performed at the Museum in 1958 at Winternitz's request, taught a master class on the occasion.

By the time of Libin's curatorship, conservation practices had changed significantly since the 1930s and 1940s, when the Museum's Stradivarius violins were kept in playing condition by having a guard practice on them, and when Curt Sachs and Winternitz viewed making the instruments playable as the principal goal of the Department. Loans of instruments to be played in outside performances generally ceased by the 1970s, and the number of Museum concerts on Department instruments shrank. But at the same time that these means of outreach—which had kept the Department in the public eye while it had no galleries—closed, other avenues opened, and Libin took advantage of them.

The Department had done radio broadcasts since Frances Morris's pioneering transmission in 1926. Libin, however, undertook the most ambitious programming yet. Broadcast in 1977–8, *Lend Us Your Ears* was a thirteen-part WNYC Radio series, produced by the Department and recorded at the Museum on Departmental instruments. *Lend Us Your Ears* was significant because it broadcast not just the playing of the Department's historic Western instruments, but the sounds of such diverse objects as a Japanese conch shell, a Syrian *oud*, and perhaps the *pièce de résistance*—the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's principal trumpet, Adolph Herseth, playing one of the Collection's Tibetan thighbone trumpets. The Department also ventured into the commercial recording field in 1978, with two releases of Mieczyslaw Horzowski playing a Cristofori composition, the oldest extant piece written for piano, on a Cristofori instrument, the oldest surviving piano. Horzowski, who studied in Vienna and had been a friend of Winternitz since before World War II, had a long history of performing at the Museum. Many more recordings, at first LPs, and by the 1980s CDs, followed, by the Musical Heritage Society, Pleiades Records, Titanic Records, and BMG Music, among others.



*Pianist Mieczysław Horszowski playing the Department's Cristofori piano, with Winternitz turning the pages.*

With the Department at last in possession of adequate exhibition space, Libin also mounted temporary and loan exhibitions on a scale unprecedented in prior years; these special-interest displays invariably attracted new visitors to the Museum and the Department. One of his first exhibitions, *To Touch and To Hear*, in August 1975, made fifty-two instruments from the collection available for blind visitors to feel, and, in many cases, play. The Museum embraced the exhibit as a social-service project, and, most unusually, waived entrance fees for blind visitors, provided free audio guides, and made free sighted guides available to each individual visitor. The exhibit opened with a perhaps slightly overstated comment that Mary Elizabeth Brown had herself been blind (she had, but only at the very end of her life). After closing at the Museum, the exhibit toured other locations.



*To Touch and to Hear, as photographed on August 15, 1975, with braille labels and special mounts for each instrument to allow it to be picked up safely with risk of dropping, by blind visitors. Note the bells at right, suspended to allow ringing.*

Another popular early Libin exhibition was *Dance Master's Kit*. Kits, or pocket violins, were carried around for use by dancing teachers; some were elaborately ornamented, and the finest luthiers made examples. Winternitz had done a show of pochettes a few years earlier, and the Libin show included an example by Stradivarius. It was extended by popular demand.



*Gallery view of the special exhibition Dance Master's Kit, on view November 24, 1981–January 31, 1982.*



*The 1985 Keynotes exhibition displayed thirty keyboard instruments from the Collection.*

Other major exhibitions during the Libin years included *Keynotes* in 1985–6, covering two centuries of piano design; it attracted over two hundred thousand visitors. *Keynotes* included almost half of the Department's collection of seventy pianos of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The popular exhibit had an audio guide and a small catalogue, and had to be extended to meet viewer demand. Later that year, with the assistance of the National Flute Association, Libin mounted *Historic Flutes from Private Collections*.



*Gallery view of the exhibition Historic Flutes from Private Collections, on view July 1–August 24, 1986.*

In 1994 another noteworthy exhibit commemorated the 250th anniversary of the death of violinmaker Guarneri del Gesù. Unlike *Keynotes*, this was a loan exhibition of twenty Guarneri violins, collectively worth about \$90 million. Nearly all were lent by concert-violinist owners including Yehudi Menuhin, Itzhak Perlman, and Isaac Stern. The exhibit, imaginatively mounted in the Vélez Blanco Patio alongside contemporary sculptures and tapestries, was up for only two weeks, during which not only did the Guarneri Quartet play, but five distinguished performers Aaron Rosand, Leonidas Kavakos, Eugene Sarbu, Ruggiero Ricci and Elmar Oliveira, performed a remarkable concert on fifteen of the displayed instruments, followed by a roundtable discussion of the best experts of the day.



*Gallery view of Violin Masterpieces of Guarneri del Gesù, on view November 22–December 4, 1994.*

Libin also continued his predecessor's work of fostering the burgeoning early-music movement, which had had its inception at the Museum with the Paul Hindemith concerts of the 1940s and 1950s. He acquired for the Department a viola da gamba made in London in about 1680, and featured in the exhibit *The Montebello Years* as one of the most significant acquisitions of that director's thirty-one-year tenure. The viola is in playing condition, and, according to Libin, filled a major gap in the Collection, which had historically been somewhat weak in bowed stringed instruments. In a similar vein, he continued the Winternitz tradition of gallery concerts, with notable performers during these years including viola da gamba player Mary Springfels, director of the Newberry Consort for twenty years, and Malcolm Wilson, an influential composer and arranger of early music for hand bells.<sup>259</sup> He also continued the departmental commitments to education, with a long-running program initiated by Assistant Curator Ken Moore for the Special School of America (New York's only competitive public school for music students), and to collaboration with visual-arts departments, the better to confirm the place of musical instruments side by side with those areas of art.

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<sup>259</sup> See "Volta from Terpsichore—Music for a Renaissance Dance (arr. Malcolm Wilson)," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpCQwLAWo9o>.



*Gallery view of the Crosby Brown Collection centennial exhibition of 1989.*

Finally, during his tenure, the Collection celebrated its centennial with a special exhibition, and a series of concerts and lectures by Christopher Hogwood, among others.

In 1994, towards the end of Libin's service as curator, Dr. Herbert Heyde—an illustrious scholar, particularly in the fields of Baroque Western European instruments and horns—joined the Department. Heyde served the Museum until his retirement in 2011 and remains as an emeritus curator today. A prolific scholar, Heyde's publications, especially his detailed catalogues of wind instruments, and his work on pre-Industrial Revolution instrument-making, are classics in the field. He was also largely responsible for the re-installation of the western section of the permanent galleries in 2010, and he recommended and successfully campaigned for important acquisitions in his fields of interest. Most notable, perhaps, was the circa 1750 walking-stick flute/oboe by Georg Scherer (2006.86). This rare instrument, made from the spiral ivory tusk of a narwhal, was given by King Frederic the Great of Prussia, himself a fine musician, to his finance minister.

### Into the Twenty-first Century



*Gallery view of the exhibition Enduring Rhythms: African Musical Instruments and the Americas, on view October 3, 1996–August 30, 1997.*

Libin was succeeded in 1999 by J. Kenneth Moore—the Frederick P. Rose Curator of Musical Instruments, and the Department's first ethnomusicologist.<sup>260</sup> Moore had able assistance from the

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<sup>260</sup> Moore began his career at the Museum as a night watchman while going to school by day in 1970, but rose rapidly thereafter: "Effective July 30, 1979, John Kenneth Moore [was] transferred to the Musical Instruments Department and promoted to Curatorial Assistant," and in the next decade he became assistant and then associate curator.



beginning from Dr. Heyde, as well as from conservator Stewart Pollens, who was succeeded in 2009 by Susanna Caldeira. Jayson Kerr Dobney joined the Department as Assistant Curator and Administrator in 2007 and curated the very successful *Guitar Heroes* exhibition of 2011. In 2012 Dr. Bradley Strauchen-Sherer, a wind instrument expert like Heyde, joined the curatorial staff.

Moore, who had been trained by Winternitz during the latter's emeritus curatorship and who took charge of the curatorial care and display of the Collection in 1990, added substantially to the Department's scholarship in non-Western areas. Although Libin's writing and special exhibitions were wide-ranging, most focused on Western musical traditions—as Winternitz's work had also done. Much of Moore's work, by contrast, has been in folk and non-Western musical traditions; *Enduring Rhythms*, for instance, looked at African musical influences in the Americas. The exhibition's display period was doubled by popular demand, and the Museum made the show's Acoustiguide available at no charge, because the sounds were deemed so integral to audience understanding.

Moore also initiated a series of collaborations with the Department of Asian Art, to highlight the Museum's strengths in that area. For many years, for example, the Museum hosted the concerts of the Society for Asian Music. The exhibit *Silk and Bamboo* was a joint Musical Instruments/Asian Art exhibit from September 5, 2009 through February 7, 2010, and displayed the music and art of China. Similarly, Moore's first purchases as curator included a rare Ming dynasty *qin* (1999.93), originally offered to Asian Art, whose senior curator was an enthusiastic player of the *qin*—a Chinese seven-stringed long zither of ancient origin, beloved of Confucius. This example was made by the Prince of Lu, son of the Emperor Wanli, in 1634. The beautiful instrument is lacquered with gold dust, has jade tuning pegs, and is inscribed with a poem about moonlight on the Yangtze River by a famous poet of the Manchu court.



*Prince Lu (Chinese, 1628–1644). Qin, 1634. China, Ming Dynasty. Wood, silk, jade. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Clara Mertens Bequest, in memory of André Mertens, Seymour Fund, The Boston Foundation Gift, Gift of Elizabeth M. Riley, by exchange, and funds from various donors, 1999 (1999.93).*

Other Department activities have been on a scale unprecedented since the Winternitz years. A greatly expanded visiting committee, chaired by renowned band leader Peter Duchin and, since the 1980s, by Sally Brown—great-grand-daughter of Mary Elizabeth Adams Brown—has embraced the performing arts of the contemporary as well as the classical-music world. Many recordings using the Collection's instruments have been made. An active Friends group now numbers about one hundred people, and has helped the Department's acquisition resources. Friends' funds recently paid for a *koto* and a Conrad Graf fortepiano of the type used by Beethoven and Schumann (2001.272). Publications and catalogues are appearing at an unprecedented rate, and include *Of Note* [[www.metmuseum.org/blogs/of-note](http://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/of-note)], the Museum's first blog by a curatorial department, and the first new comprehensive guide to the Collection in decades, scheduled for publication later in 2014.

The *koto* is the national instrument of Japan, and the example purchased by the Amati is the most distinguished instrument of its kind in this country. Inlaid with gold, silver, tortoiseshell, and ivory, it is unique because it still has its original traveling crate and lacquer storage box, as well as brocade wrappings and other accoutrements. The inlay is the work of the famous metalworking family Goto; Arms and Armor has examples of Goto works of similar style and exquisite workmanship.



*Koto, early 17th century. Japan. Metalwork by Goto Teijo, 9th generation Goto master, Japan (1603–1673); Workshop of Gotō Yūjō (Japanese, ca. 1440–1512, first-generation Gotō master). Various woods, ivory and tortoiseshell inlays, gold and silver inlays, metalwork. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Amati Gifts, 2007 (2007.194a–f).*

The Graf, a beautiful instrument, with a Biedermeier cabinet, was acquired in Europe in virtually original condition. It has a serial number very close to the serial number of Schumann's Graf; Beethoven's Graf was somewhat different, in that it had four strings per note, to increase the volume, and also had a horn that fitted over the soundboard and sent the sounds directly to the deaf composer's ears. As Moore indicated in his original description of the Graf: "In terms of craftsmanship, no finer keyboard instrument (or mechanical object of wood) has ever been constructed." The Graf is in playing condition, is used regularly for concerts, and has been used for recordings as well.



*Andrea Amati (Italian, ca. 1505–1578). "Kurtz" Violin, ca. 1560. Spruce, maple, ebony. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Robert Alonzo Lehman Bequest, 1999 (1999.26).*

Needless to say, there have been other important recent acquisitions. Almost the first purchase made under Moore's curatorship was the "Kurtz" violin (1999.26) (so-called after its last owner,

Arvad Kurtz, from whose estate the Museum acquired the instrument) by the first-known Cremonese violin maker, Andrea Amati. This violin was long known as the "King Charles IX Amati" because it appears to have been part of a set made by Amati for Charles IX of France, crowned in 1561. It has a distinguished history of use and performance, including performances for commercial recordings, and is still played today in Museum concerts. It became the Collection's earliest violin by almost a century.

Dating from a century later, but equally distinguished in pedigree, is the Jacob Stainer viola bought by the Department in 2013. Stainer was an Austrian maker whose violins and violas were prized more highly than Stradivari's during the chamber music era of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Bach and Mozart used Stainer instruments. The Department's viola is one of only a handful to survive in its original large size; most earlier violas were cut down to a smaller size when musical fashion changed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Owning the Stainer means that for the first time the Department can, and does, offer concerts performed on a complete string quartet of first-rate historic instruments.



*Franz Peter Bunsen (German, ca. 1725–1795). Kettle Drums, 1779. Silver, iron, calfskin, textiles; Diameter: 53 cm (20 7/8 in.); Height: 41 cm (16 1/8 in.); 24 kg (52.9 lbs.). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Robert Alonzo Lehman Bequest, Acquisitions Fund, and Frederick M. Lehman Bequest, 2010 (2010.138.1-4).*

The spectacular silver kettle drums made for George III of the United Kingdom are among the notable purchases of the twenty-first century to date. However, in this century the Department,

like many others in the Museum, has also expanded its acquisitions mandate to include contemporary instruments of "museum quality," such as the 1993 d'Aquisto guitar, donated by Steve Miller in 2012.

Today also, while Concerts and Lectures handles most large performances at the Museum, the Department maintains an active concert roster of its own. Three multiconcert series are offered every year: the monthly Friday-evening Patron's Lounge performances, open to Museum Patrons; the monthly gallery concerts on weekday afternoons, open to all Museum visitors; and a third series arranged for the members of the Friends of the Department of Musical Instruments. In addition, special concerts are often arranged in connection with temporary exhibitions—the guitarist Steve Miller, a visiting committee member, has given two such concerts in the past two years.

The Department has also increased its special exhibition schedule to a level unseen since the Winternitz years, with a spotlight on neglected areas of the Collection. Thus the exhibition *Sounding the Pacific* focused on a region where Mary Elizabeth Brown had made a point of collecting, but which remains relatively little-known—the instruments of Oceania.



*Gallery view of the exhibition Sounding the Pacific: Musical Instruments of Oceania, on view November 17, 2009–January 23, 2011.*

The *Guitar Heroes* exhibition was based on the *chefs d'oeuvre* of three twentieth-century New York luthiers, and included many electric as well as acoustic guitars. The approximately

214,000 visitors (1,700 per day) were often of an age and demographic rarely attracted to the Museum. As had been the case with Winternitz's Telesonic tape recording system in 1973, *Guitar Heroes* also put the Department in the Museum vanguard with its first smartphone app, which allowed visitors to hear various celebrated artists playing the guitars on loan for the show. ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jI0D\\_RIFxcw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jI0D_RIFxcw))



*Gallery view of the exhibition Guitar Heroes, on view February 9–July 4, 2011.*

As we complete the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of a musical instruments collection at the Museum, the Department's future is no longer in doubt. The needs—for more and better display space, restoration, and performance space—remain acute, but for perhaps the first time in its history, the Department has a full complement of professional curators. Through their publications, lectures, and professional affiliations, these curators have contributed to the Department's leading position in the international field of organology. Moore, for example, recently served as president of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Musical Instruments [CIMCIM], which Winternitz founded. The Department is also at the forefront of the Museum's digital initiatives, as it was more than forty years ago with the Museum's first audio guide: today's "audio guide" now includes video clips of performances of the instruments, so that visitors can see how they are played while hearing what they sound like.

The Department has also made recordings of its instruments widely available on social media and the internet, so that not only Museum visitors, but virtual visitors, can see and hear the Collection from anywhere in the world. Winternitz's shade is no doubt applauding!