

ISABELLA
STEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM

“OH, YOU RED SOX!! - ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER, 1912”

Isabella Stewart Gardner: The Original Rowdy Red Sox Fan?



Gardner Museum Director Anne Hawley and museum staff celebrate the installation of an “Oh, you Red Sox!” banner erected in celebration of the Sox.

Isabella Stewart Gardner creator, arts patron and Victorian-era media darling, Isabella Stewart Gardner was also an avid Boston Red Sox fan and season ticket holder, a New Yorker who moved to Boston and supported Boston’s boys of summer.

In 1912, the grand dame, quite literally, celebrated her team championship victory over the New York Giants in *unique fashion* – attending a Boston Symphony Orchestra performance at Symphony Hall wearing a white cloth headband wrapped around her head and scrawled in red letters with the words “*Oh you Red Sox!*”

The act prompted a reporter to describe her as “a woman...gone crazy”:

“It looks as if the woman had gone crazy. With this band bound like a fillet around her auburn hair, she appeared in her conspicuous seat at a recent Saturday night Symphony Concert, almost causing a panic among those in the audience who discovered the ornamentation, and even for a moment upsetting Dr. Muck's men so that their startled eyes wandered from their music stands.” (*Town Topics, 1912*)

In an unidentified letter dated Oct. 14 (1912), Isabella Gardner wrote of attending the games, “Here it has been only World Series of baseball...now the Red Sox are again ‘Champs’ – I went to the Boston Games with Peak, had nearly [been] killed getting in (you never saw such crowds) and there sat and yelled with the rest! ...”

The museum’s archives contain these and numerous other references to her creatively vocal support for the team.

RED SOX FEVER AT ITS MOST SUBLIME!

Every April and October, in celebration of the historic fervor of Boston Red Sox fans – including Isabella Stewart Gardner – and in commemoration of the Red Sox’ home opener and post-season championship bid, a **25-foot banner bearing the words ““Oh, you Red Sox!” – Isabella Stewart Gardner, 1912”** is hung along the exterior gate at 280 The Fenway – just blocks from Fenway Park – as a call out to the community and the city and a symbol of the historic importance and memorable loyalties the team has enjoyed over the past 100-plus years. The twice-annual installation, each April and October, continues a tradition begun at the Gardner Museum in 2003, as the museum celebrated its Centennial and the Sox sat 1:1 against the dreaded Yankees. The following year, in 2004, the banner helped cheer the Sox on to a historic World Series win to put an end to the team’s 86 year-old curse! In April, 2006, the banner hung for the team’s full 10-game home opening run.

Throughout the year, visitors to the Gardner Museum wearing Red Sox paraphernalia also receive a special **\$2 off admission**, a direct reference to Mrs. Gardner’s headpiece that so scandalized the media.

Visitors can also learn more about Isabella Gardner’s Red Sox connections in an **archival information binder** available through the visitors’ information desk on the museum’s first floor. The binder contains archival photographs, images from a guestbook of Mrs. Gardner’s containing press clippings, notes and Isabella’s “Oh, you Red Sox!” inscription from October 1912, among other information connecting these two great institutions.

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