

# NADIA BOULANGER AND THE STRAVINSKYS



A SELECTED CORRESPONDENCE

*Edited by Kimberly A. Francis*



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# Nadia Boulanger and the Stravinskys

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Edited by  
Kimberly A. Francis



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Dedicated to Pamela and Thomas Francis



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I thank my parents for everything they have given me and for their support over the years. I lovingly dedicate this book to them and their example. And to Brian, Emily, Ellison, and Quinton, thank you for your love and patience. In one of Boulanger's favorite anecdotes about Stravinsky, she would tell of his refusal to bow to critics: he didn't need their applause, he would say, because he had his *boussole* (compass) in his pocket. My dear children, my brilliant and wonderful husband, I don't need a compass: I have you. I thank you for your patience and love through thick and through thin.

# Note on Companion Website

All transcriptions of this book's corresponding French originals can be consulted on the book's companion website, <https://digex.lib.uoguelph.ca/exhibits/show/boulangierandstravinskys>. Indeed, I designed the website to serve as a reference tool in itself. All letters may be sorted by author, date, and indexed items. For example, it is possible to isolate all letters written by Boulanger that reference the *Symphonie de psaumes*, if one so desires. One may also choose between viewing French and English texts side by side, or viewing French or English letters in isolation. All editorial comments and footnotes appear in the print version only.



# Abbreviations

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| F-LYc         | Conservatoire national supérieur musique et danse de Lyon, Lyon, France  |
| CINLB         | Centre international Nadia et Lili Boulanger   |
| F-Pn          | Bibliothèque nationale de France—National Library of France  |
| CH-Fts        | Foundation Théodore Strawinsky, Genève, Switzerland  |
| N.L.a.        | Lettres autographes, nouveau fonds—Autograph letters, new collection   |
| US-NYp        | New York Public Library  |
| Rés. Vm. Dos. | Réserve Vm. Dossier—Miscellaneous reserved (unpublished/autograph) materials in the Bibliothèque nationale de France |
| CH-Bps        | Stravinsky collection, Paul Sacher Stiftung  |

To condense score citations, the following abbreviations have been employed:

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| ph. | Photostat (used to describe all manner of reproduced scores, particularly as “photostat” is the word used by Boulanger and Strawinsky regardless of the actual means of reproduction). |
| a.  | autograph  |
| 2p  | two piano  |
| 2pr | two-piano reduction  |
| p/v | piano/vocal reduction  |



# Introduction

It all began with music lessons for Stravinsky's son in October of 1929. By that fall, Nadia Boulanger, thirty-two-year-old professor at the École normale de musique in Paris and at the Conservatoire américain at Fontainebleau, had garnered a reputation as an extraordinarily gifted music educator. The daughter of a Parisian composer, the distinguished Ernest Boulanger, and an exiled Russian princess and former Conservatoire vocal student, Raïssa [née Mychestky], Boulanger had made her place in Paris as a composer, performer, and pedagogue.<sup>1</sup> Her musical prowess had been tested and proven already by her prodigious graduation with four first prizes from the Conservatoire de Paris at the age of sixteen. By 1929, despite abandoning her own moderately scandalous career as a composer in favor of performing and teaching, Boulanger had ascended to a compelling position in modernist circles as a charismatic, passionate teacher of musical composition, harmony, history, accompaniment, and performance. Above all, she championed new music.

Contemporaneously, by the late 1920s, Igor Stravinsky held both an imperious and a controversial place within the modernist musical community. Son of a Russian opera singer, Fyodor, and a Ukrainian-born mother, Anna [née Kholodovskaya], Stravinsky returned from Switzerland to Paris following the First World War to find that his new neoclassical aesthetic divided the city that had earlier celebrated him for works such as *The Firebird* and *Petrushka*. Though his professional world and social acquaintances appear to have had little connection to Boulanger's at this time, Boulanger had already developed a deep devotion to Stravinsky's music, and was actively promoting it. Sparse evidence

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1. Raïssa (Rosalie) Mychestky came to Paris in 1876, claiming to be an exiled Russian princess. Rumors exist that Raïssa may in fact have been Jewish and from Poland. Jérôme Spycket argues that Raïssa was the daughter of Princess Yekaterina Ivanovna Myshchetskaya, who was German in background and had converted from Lutheranism. Spycket suggests that Raïssa was in fact illegitimate, and the title came to her mother as a means of covering up an affair with a member of the imperial family. Spycket, *À la recherche*, 65. Raïssa Boulanger never spoke Russian at home. Nadia Boulanger did not know the language and had to ask students to translate for her. Boulanger's later claims that she understood the Slavic soul were never autobiographical in nature.



and anecdotal references describe Stravinsky's visits to Boulanger's studio in the 1920s, a teaching space that must have reminded him of the *jours fixes* that he had attended at the home of his own beloved teacher, Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908).<sup>2</sup> During visits with Boulanger's students, Stravinsky spoke about his works and provided feedback on the compositions of Boulanger's pupils. These occasional exchanges, as well as Boulanger's extraordinary reputation as a pedagogue, led Stravinsky to approach Boulanger about facilitating the education of his son, Sviatoslav Soulima. Boulanger accepted the eighteen-year-old as a student, and in so doing drew the Stravinskys into her world just as she entered theirs, eventually corresponding with Catherine, Anna, Denise, Théodore, Soulima, Françoise, Milène, "Kitty," and of course Igor Stravinsky (table I.1).

The Paul Sacher Stiftung, the Fondation Théodore Strawinsky, and the New York Public Library all hold Boulanger's letters to members of the Stravinsky family. The Stravinskys' letters to Boulanger can be consulted at the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Stravinsky's letters reveal his professional ambition and bear witness to his thirst for praise, his struggle with detractors, and his businesslike approach to composition. He operates in these letters as both friend and foe, by turns officious and doting. His words underscore his deep love of family and friends as well as his ready manipulation of those who could help him cement his legacy.

Boulanger's letters offer a candid glimpse of the praise she lavished on Stravinsky and her professional strategies employed for his benefit. Particularly rich are her comments on the *Symphony of Psalms*, the *Dumbarton Oaks Concerto*, the *Symphony in C*, and *The Rake's Progress*. Invaluable are her accounts of the early reception of *The Rake* and her general reportage on the reestablishment of European cultural traditions after the Second World War, especially the place of post-tonal composition and its effect on young composers. Her words allow for an intimate experience of both her response to the way in which Stravinsky distanced himself from her after 1952 and her concern over his health and well-being as reported to her by Stravinsky's children. Overall, this epistolary exchange paints a firsthand account of the transatlantic nature of musical life during the modernist era for both Boulanger and Stravinsky. It speaks of the complex relationship between creation and reception, between composition and transmission, and between friendship and careerism.

## Boulanger's Stravinskys

Adding an additional layer of nuance and interest to this epistolary account are the letters exchanged between Boulanger and Stravinsky's immediate family.

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2. Brooks, *Musical Work*, 27–28, 174.

Table I.1. Stravinsky Family Correspondence with Boulanger, Bibliothèque nationale de France

| Name                            | Relation to Igor Stravinsky | Shelfmark ( <i>F-Pn</i> ) | Dates   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Stravinsky, Anna                | <i>Mother</i>               | N.L.a. 108 (85–87)        | 1930–35 |
| Stravinsky, Catherine           | <i>First wife</i>           | N.L.a. 108 (88–96)        | 1929–37 |
| Stravinsky, Catherine (“Kitty”) | <i>Granddaughter</i>        | N.L.a. 108 (97–101)       | 1967–70 |
| Stravinsky, Denise              | <i>Daughter-in-law</i>      | N.L.a. 108 (102–7)        | 1939–76 |
| Stravinsky, Françoise           | <i>Daughter-in-law</i>      | N.L.a. 108 (108–14)       | 1946–72 |
| Stravinsky, Igor                |                             | N.L.a. 108 (115–310)      | 1929–69 |
| Stravinsky, Milène              | <i>Daughter</i>             | N.L.a. 108 (312–18)       | 1969–75 |
| Stravinsky, Soulima             | <i>Son</i>                  | N.L.a. 108 (319–87)       | 1929–77 |
| Strawinsky, Théodore            | <i>Son</i>                  | N.L.a. 109 (1–62)         | 1931–80 |

The Stravinsky family, excluding Igor, sent 140 letters to the French pedagogue between 1929 and 1979. At either end of this edition, Igor Stravinsky’s words retreat into the background, and those of his immediate family frame and fill the narrative. This edition would be incomplete without a discussion of the correspondents beyond Igor Stravinsky who so enrich this collection (table I.1).

Yekaterina (Catherine) Gavrilovna Stravinsky (née Nossenko) (1880–1939) and Anna Kirillovna Stravinsky (née Kholodovskaya) (1854–1939)

The letters of Anna Stravinsky, Igor’s mother, and Catherine Stravinsky, his first wife, appear in this collection twice and five times, respectively. I have chosen in this collection to refer to his first wife as Catherine, as this is how she self-identified in letters to Boulanger, and it is what her children called her. I link Anna and Catherine within this introduction neither to diminish their importance as individual authors nor to suggest a sort of uniformity of voice within their texts—quite the contrary. Instead, I join them to draw attention to their role as matriarchs, to emphasize the power this title granted them within the Stravinsky domestic framework, and to underline the impact they had on the lives of those within the household. Given the tremendously patriarchal portrayal and framing of Stravinsky’s career and his family’s structure in the

current literature, I wish to emphasize here the women's voices in this family and the dynamic nature of their personalities. I argue that it was the Stravinsky women who facilitated and nurtured the lines of communication between Igor Stravinsky and Nadia Boulanger in the early 1930s. Without them, Boulanger's connection to Stravinsky would likely have faltered.

Anna Stravinsky, the composer's strong, intimidating mother, was the youngest of four daughters. Though her decision was frowned upon, she chose to marry Fyodor Stravinsky at the age of nineteen.<sup>3</sup> Beyond this brief biographical reference to his mother's background, stories of Igor's parents center primarily on his father. In 1876, Fyodor Stravinsky premiered the role of Mephistopheles in Gounod's *Faust* at the Mariyinsky Theatre to great acclaim. That same year, Anna and Fyodor moved to St. Petersburg with their first son, Roman, then only a year old. By October 1881, the family was living in an apartment at 8 Kryukov Canal, and on June 17 [o.s. June 5], 1882, their third son, Igor, was born.

Anna remained in Russia during the revolution and emigrated west to live with Igor (by all accounts her least-favorite son) and his family in June 1922.<sup>4</sup> She died in 1939, the same year as Catherine and just six months after Stravinsky's daughter Lyudmila. Anna's letters to Boulanger are polite and respectful, extending warm wishes to Boulanger's mother. Indeed, Anna's mention twice in her letters of the relationship between mother and daughter leads me to suspect it was a bond she respected and valued. It is quite likely that Boulanger's mother's claims to a Russian royal background may have heightened the affinity between Anna Stravinsky and the Boulangers, though none of the Boulangers' letters to the Stravinskys contains Russian text.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Nadia did not speak the language.

Catherine Stravinsky is the other matriarchal figure with whom Boulanger maintained a conversation.<sup>6</sup> Catherine has often been painted as dutiful,

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3. For one such depiction of Anna and Fyodor Stravinsky, see Walsh, *Creative Spring*, 4–15. Richard Taruskin also provides details about Stravinsky's upbringing as related to his father and particularly to his father's work as an opera singer. He provides very little background information about Anna Stravinsky. Taruskin, *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions*, 77–92.
  4. Robert Craft states this in his foreword to the Stravinsky correspondence, before presenting some of Catherine Stravinsky's letters. See Craft, *Stravinsky: Selected Correspondence*, 3. Walsh repeats this idea, *Creative Spring*, 4–15.
  5. The Stravinsky archives at the Paul Sacher Stiftung contain only one letter written by Raïssa Boulanger to the Stravinsky family. Much of the letter is illegible, and it was most likely written at the end of Raïssa's struggle with Parkinson's disease. The entire text is in French, except for a brief valediction in Russian.
  6. Life in Catherine and Igor Stravinsky's home is considered in Théodore Strawinsky's *Catherine and Igor Stravinsky*. The book is dedicated to Boulanger

though resentful of her husband's extramarital affairs. She is rarely allowed moments of agency or assertiveness in the current literature, with perhaps the exception of Stephen Walsh's presentation of her as an "intelligent, profound, and exceptionally warm-hearted woman."<sup>7</sup> The letters included here reinforce Catherine's agency, showing her to have been a caring mother and certainly not a shrinking violet. Every bit the fiery counterpart to her husband, Catherine Stravinsky appears in these letters as an authoritarian—someone who expected her vision for her children's care enforced and who did not hesitate to impose her expectations on Boulanger. I have chosen to include the last letter sent from Catherine to Boulanger (undated, but likely from late 1936 or early 1937). It is touching that the last extant exchange between the two involved Catherine thanking Boulanger for the flowers the latter had arranged to have waiting when Catherine returned from the Sancellemoz sanatorium for what all hoped—in vain—would be a lasting recovery from her battle with tuberculosis.

### Théodore Strawinsky (1907–89)

Of all Stravinsky's children, Théodore Strawinsky arguably bore the most striking resemblance to his father and yet was often at odds with him. Théodore never employed the "v" in the family last name. Even his posthumous foundation remains the Fondation Théodore Strawinsky. For this reason, and as a means of emphasizing the arm's-length connection Théodore appears to have had with the American Stravinskys, I have retained the different spelling of Théodore's last name in this edition. No evidence exists in his letters as to why he maintained the older spelling, though I suspect it related in part to his artistic identity and in part to cherished family memories from before 1939 and the mixture of cultural influences—particularly Russian, French, and Swiss—that both fractured and forged his upbringing.

Théodore's correspondence reveals him as a passionate, devoted, and deeply religious man. Trained as a painter at l'Académie André Lhote à Paris, he achieved international acclaim by the age of twenty-four, and worked as a professional artist for the remainder of his life. Of Théodore's numerous

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and she played a pivotal role in facilitating its publication. Walsh also discusses Catherine at length in his own biography, particularly *A Creative Spring*, 90–91.

7. Walsh, *Creative Spring*, 90–91. The most recent account of Catherine Stravinsky's relationship with Igor Stravinsky can be found in Robert Craft, *Stravinsky: Discoveries and Memories*. Indeed, Craft's text is provocative in many ways, particularly his portrayal of the Stravinsky family as "dysfunctional." *Discoveries and Memories* serves as an intriguing counterpoint to the correspondence presented in this volume.

accolades, the most treasured was likely his appointment as Commander of the Order of St. Gregory the Great by Pope Paul VI in 1977.

Théodore was the only one of Stravinsky's children never to emigrate to the United States. Following his marriage to Denise Guerzoni in 1936, his adult life was spent in Le Mans, France, and after 1946, in Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>8</sup> In 1941 he was singled out as a potential communist and detained at Camp Récébédou near Toulouse by the French government for several months—a terrifying reality his father tried desperately to mitigate while in the United States, as the correspondence demonstrates. After the war, Théodore and Denise assumed care for their niece Catherine (Kitty), the daughter of Théodore's sister, Lyudmila (Mika), and Yuri Mandelstam. Mandelstam's story adds further tragedy to this branch of the Stravinsky family tree. Arrested in Paris during the Second World War, despite having converted from Judaism to the Orthodox faith in 1935, he died in a concentration camp in Jarworzhno, Poland, on October 15, 1943, leaving Kitty an orphan.<sup>9</sup> Théodore and Denise officially adopted Kitty in 1952, when she was fifteen years old.

Théodore's first surviving letter to Boulanger dates from March 22, 1935; it was sent to offer condolences after he learned of her mother's death. Few clues remain to explain how or why Boulanger grew close to Théodore, and this element of the Boulanger–Stravinsky network remains a mystery. Yet after 1936, and particularly following the Second World War, they corresponded quite regularly and visited each other often, especially after Théodore's conversion to Catholicism in 1947. Boulanger became a sort of adopted mother/aunt figure to Théodore, and their shared faith is often referenced in the correspondence. The later, deeply emotional letters reveal Théodore's complicated relationship with his father, whom he dearly loved; his deep-seated resentment and dislike of his stepmother Vera; and his distrust of Robert Craft, his father's amanuensis after 1946. Théodore's correspondence with Boulanger, it would appear, served as an outlet for his frustrations and a source of comfort. Théodore Stravinsky's letters aid in understanding the final years of Igor Stravinsky's life, and though they must be read through the lens of a son who never forgave his father's remarriage, they nonetheless reveal the complicated nature of the Stravinsky family's inner workings and the role Boulanger played as a sort of adopted family member.<sup>10</sup>

8. For details about the marriage, see Walsh, *Second Exile*, 50–52. Walsh quotes Vera Sudeikina's letter on the wedding from July 10, 1936. This letter is now housed at the Paul Sacher Stiftung.

9. Walsh, *Second Exile*, 161; and Weeda, *Yuriy Mandel'shtam*, xxi.

10. Tamara Levitz similarly cautions others about reading Théodore Stravinsky's letters as objective texts. See Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries*, 295 (especially n. 12).

## Denise Strawinsky (née Guerzoni) (1914–2004)

Denise Strawinsky was the daughter of Swiss artist Stephanie Guerzoni (1887–1970). Guerzoni was the only female student of painter Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918, with whom she studied from 1915–18. Denise appears to have been a loving wife and devoted daughter-in-law. When, in 1938, the Strawinsky family found itself convalescing at the sanatorium in Sancellemoz after the death of Lyudmila, Denise was there to serve as nurse. Elsewhere, Denise actively participated in family matters. Her letters to Boulanger, three of which I have included in this edition, often show her acting as intermediary between Boulanger and Igor or Théodore. In moments of crisis, it was Denise, rather than her husband, who took up the pen to correspond with Boulanger. This collection reveals Denise as diplomat—carefully lying to protect Boulanger from news of Igor Strawinsky’s brazen travels executed against doctor’s orders in 1939—and as witness to the Strawinsky family dynamic, supporting, with her husband, the post-1971 counternarratives that celebrated Catherine Strawinsky. Denise Strawinsky’s letters represent another strong, assertive female voice in the Strawinsky family environs—a voice that helped smooth over dissent or facilitate action so as to protect a certain brand of the Strawinsky family legacy.<sup>11</sup>

## Sviatoslav (Soulima) Strawinsky (1910–94)

The younger son and third child of Igor and Catherine Strawinsky, Soulima was born in Lausanne, Switzerland.<sup>12</sup> Boulanger taught Soulima—or Sviétik, as she referred to him in her diaries during the 1930s—composition and analysis every Tuesday morning at 11:30 a.m.<sup>13</sup> Piano performance was likely also discussed, especially given that Boulanger and Soulima Strawinsky concertized together in the late 1930s as well as in 1946, performing two-piano reductions of Igor Strawinsky’s works they themselves created.<sup>14</sup>

Soulima met his wife, Françoise Bon (Blondlat), in Paris where she was studying law during the war.<sup>15</sup> Their son Jean was born shortly after the war ended. From across the Atlantic, Boulanger sent numerous care packages to

11. Indeed, seventeen years following Igor’s death, Denise Strawinsky published her own account of the domestic life of Catherine and Igor. See Denise and Théodore Strawinsky, *Au cœur du foyer*.

12. Walsh, *Creative Spring*, 146.

13. Francis, “A Dialogue Begins,” 22–44. The typical spelling of this Russian nickname is Svétik, but Boulanger very clearly added the “i” to her spelling of the name.

14. For further details of their performance practice, see Brooks, *Musical Work*, 112–13.

15. Walsh, *Second Exile*, 179.

the young family, whose vulnerability in early postwar Paris concerned her greatly. After returning to the French capital herself, Boulanger grew close to the trio, and the accounts she sent to Igor Stravinsky warmly depict the time she spent in Soulima and Françoise's apartment. After the war, Igor Stravinsky convinced his 35-year-old son and daughter-in-law to relocate to the United States. Boulanger remained a faithful reference writer for Soulima as he applied to American teaching positions after emigrating.

The correspondence suggests that Soulima, like so many others of her alumni, remained a student in Boulanger's mind for her entire life, and she often references him in her letters first and foremost in terms of his musical development. As for Soulima, this collection presents the youthful, spirited nature of his letters before World War II and the reverent, sober voice of those that followed it. In the early years, Soulima approached Boulanger as more of a governess and confidante, while in the later years, his candor is replaced by humble respect. After 1950, when Soulima was appointed to a professorship in piano performance at the University of Illinois, his letters depict him at once excited about establishing a reputation for himself outside of his father's shadow and deeply concerned about his father's legacy. Unlike his brother, Soulima does not discuss the family drama that surrounded Stravinsky's physical care post-1968 in letters to Boulanger. The sobriety of Soulima Stravinsky's own brief messages at this point serve as a foil to his brother's angry and disillusioned prose.

### Expressive Markings: The Question of Love

A central theme found in the letters concerns the question of love shared between Boulanger and Igor Stravinsky. Boulanger's letters, especially those after the Second World War, often reference her love for the composer. Few of her letters post-1945 fail to mention that she "loves . . . both [Igor and Vera] madly" (January 27, 1946) and "loves [Stravinsky] so" (November 25, 1946). Stravinsky, similarly, ends letters with expressions of affection for Boulanger. His first letters after Boulanger leaves the United States end with "love and kisses" (November 23, 1946) and "[from Stravinsky,] who loves you" (September 5, 1948). But it was not a passionate, romantic love.

We now know Boulanger had at least three affairs during her lifetime with married men (Raoul Pugno, Camille Maclair, and Prince Pierre of Monaco), and there is no lack of evidence for these relationships. Alexandra Laederich and Rémy Stricker engage compellingly and thoughtfully with the complicated and convoluted nature of Boulanger's romantic relationships, as recorded in her diaries at length.<sup>16</sup> There is no such evidence of an affair with Stravinsky.

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16. Stricker, "La Critique de Nadia Boulanger," in *Témoignages et études*, 131–18.

If nothing else, Boulanger's devotion to Stravinsky, to his children, and to his first wife, Catherine, stood as a formidable obstacle to her own pursuit of the composer—not to mention that a public alliance with a foreigner, and such a high-profile musician, would have jeopardized if not altogether undone the professional identity she had built for herself.<sup>17</sup>

Instead, Boulanger's was a platonic love built around Stravinsky as an artist, as the composer of the music in which she so deeply believed. In many respects, Boulanger lived an isolated life. Talent, age, and circumstance distanced her from the majority of her peers, and the death of loved ones separated her from family. Her gender marked her as the exception in almost all the professional circles she frequented. Stravinsky, however, realized her vision. His music satisfied all of Boulanger's criteria for great masterworks. When handed the opportunity to learn of Stravinsky's kindness and humanity, Boulanger connected his warmth and friendship to his compositions. Indeed, she found him to be art incarnate, and he assumed for her both a human and a superhuman quality. Boulanger blended her love for Stravinsky and her love of Stravinsky's music in her lectures and her writing, treasuring this unique and intimate connection. Regardless of how sincerely that love was reciprocated, her intimate knowledge of the composer remained something Boulanger treasured.

In fact one wonders, at times, if the Stravinskys in general and Igor in particular ever completely returned Boulanger's devotion. Yet, to deem Boulanger naïvely enraptured and Stravinsky only selfishly exploitative contradicts the evidence, to a degree. When at his most professional, Stravinsky can seem almost dismissive and cold in his letters to Boulanger, but the reader should not confuse expediency with apathy. Stravinsky expresses his affection in specific contexts—there is a time and a place. And yet there are moments, particularly after 1952, when Stravinsky is clearly guilty of callous and calculating behavior. I argue that these letters reveal an uneven and ultimately platonic love centered around and fed by Stravinsky's art and ego, a love that blossomed in the context of a friendship that in and of itself relieved Boulanger's sense of isolation.

## Editorial Apparatus

Publishing both the French and English versions of these letters would amount to an excessively large text. Instead, the French transcriptions have been included as part of this book's companion website, where one can choose to view the fully indexed and searchable French and English letters, consulting them in isolation or with both languages side by side.

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17. Francis, *Teaching Stravinsky*, 116–19.



The letters presented here were chosen because of their narrative power and ability to walk the reader both through forty years of the tumultuous twentieth century and through the reactions of their authors to said events. If letter content became predictable (for example, Boulanger's annual well-wishes on the anniversary of the death of Stravinsky's first wife on March 2), I chose not to publish them. Likewise, Christmas and birthday greetings, unless accompanied by additional information, have not been included here. Whenever possible, I have endeavored to present the writers in dialogue with one another rather than produce sequences of unanswered letters.

Unfortunately, most material sent by Boulanger to extended family members no longer exists in the archives, though it would have been delightful to read her response to Catherine's letter of April 1931 or her letter to Anna Stravinsky after the premiere of the *Symphony of Psalms* in Brussels in December 1930. The lack of extant letters sent to Soulima Stravinsky also disappoints. Those letters in Boulanger's hand retained in Soulima's papers at the New York Public Library fail to be of consequence, and so have been omitted. Along these same lines, it would appear Boulanger did not bond with Stravinsky's daughter Milène to the same extent she did with his sons, and so the only surviving letter from Stravinsky's younger daughter that I have included here appears on October 27, 1969, as a response to Boulanger's presentation of her condolences concerning the situation that surrounded Stravinsky's final convalescence in New York. One would have hoped for more from Milène's voice, and it remains curious to me that Boulanger failed to connect with her as strongly as with the other women of the family. I have also chosen not to include any letters written by Françoise Stravinsky, not because of a lack of extant documents but because of a lack of germane material. Finally, I have omitted the letters written by Stravinsky's granddaughter Kitty (Catherine) to Boulanger. Though gracious enough, and indicative of the lengths to which Boulanger went to remember the birthdays of her friends' children and grandchildren, the letters from Kitty to Boulanger are rather perfunctory.

Nothing that remains was chosen to sensationalize, but neither were letters excluded to protect the correspondents in question. This rich collection often presents Boulanger at her most vulnerable and candid, and Stravinsky at his more playful and paternal. I remain sensitive to the private nature of Boulanger's and Stravinsky's prose, and yet, the significant moments of these letters often lie at the interstices of the guarded and the candid.

In the editorial apparatus itself, it has been my intention to stay out of the way as much as possible. Important figures, events, and works have been identified in a footnote at first mention, but otherwise I have endeavored to let the voices represented by these letters speak for themselves—as much as any historical document can indeed do so. All references to Stravinsky's

works remain in the language in which they were discussed, most commonly French—e.g., *L'oiseau de feu*, not *The Firebird*; the *Symphonie de psaumes*, not the *Symphony of Psalms*.

In the interest of comprehensiveness and fidelity to the narrative to which this correspondence attests, I have chosen to include materials published elsewhere, including the forty letters previously released in Robert Craft's *Stravinsky: A Selected Correspondence*. Indeed, my edited collection seeks to ameliorate the image of Boulanger constructed by Craft's editorial work, an image Craft in several publications tied to subservience and the macabre.<sup>18</sup> I and others have criticized elsewhere the errors in Craft's edition, including translation issues and his conflating of letters.<sup>19</sup> Consider, for example, that Craft confuses the letters from May 19, 1941, and July 29, 1941, intermingling the paragraphs of the two. Elsewhere there are translation issues that—though not fatal—nevertheless detract from the accuracy of the text. And finally, Craft did not at all understand the scope of the correspondence, claiming that Boulanger and Stravinsky's early dealings “were not documented in epistolary form” and that Boulanger's “chapter in the eventual Stravinsky biography will have to be constructed from the letters and memoirs of others.”<sup>20</sup> Surely, my own edition sheds further light on this matter.

Each letter included here is preceded by the author's name and the name of the intended recipient. The shared last name of six of the correspondents in this collection makes the use of the Stravinsky surname potentially confusing. For this reason, I have chosen to use the surname alone only when referencing Igor. All other Stravinskys appear either with both first and last name or by first name only. I have also chosen to retain the different and ever-evolving transliterations of the Strawinsky/Stravinsky surname in the body of the letters published here. The question of when and why Strawinsky became Stravinsky—and Boulanger's seeming difficulty in adopting this change—becomes yet another subtlety worth tracking in the correspondence.

Every letter appears in its entirety. Nothing has been omitted; ellipsis points are as their authors wrote them. All postscripts have been included here at the bottom of each letter, regardless of where they were written in the original. Geographical names appear in English, for the most part, though French street names and diacritics have been used for addresses in Paris, e.g., St.

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18. Craft, *Stravinsky: Selected Correspondence*, xvii. In my own conclusions, I agree with and am indebted to Matthew Toth's work on the Stravinsky–Craft relationship. See Toth, “Editorial Craft: Reconsidering Igor Stravinsky's Letters to Nadia Boulanger,” Gossip Conference/ Colloque Le Potin, University of Guelph, ON, May 2012.

19. Jeanice Brooks, “The *fonds* Boulanger at the Bibliothèque Nationale,” *Notes* 51 (1995): 1235.

20. Craft, ed. *Selected Correspondence*, xvii.

Honoré, rue Ballu, and 9ème for the *arrondissement* where Boulanger lived. Whenever possible, letters have been dated by the time they were written, not postmarked, if both pieces of information existed. I have assumed some dates incorrect based on the content of the letters, and have inserted what I take to be the correct date in square brackets.

I have tried, whenever possible, to render Boulanger's various punctuation habits intelligible. She would often employ dashes as all manner of punctuation (periods, commas, question marks). My main goal was readability, and so any editorial changes I made to punctuation have been done with the intention of clarifying, not altering, Boulanger's meaning. All underlining, whether single or multiple, is here transcribed as italics. I have reproduced strikethroughs where appropriate. In the case of telegrams or letters typed on an American typewriter that are therefore missing all diacritics, said markings remain also absent in the transcriptions. Similarly, all telegrams remain in capital letters, as they were in the originals.

It bears mentioning that there are numerous errors within Boulanger's original prose. These vary from the simple omission of a word or a hyphen when using the imperative, to capitalizing the first letter in the names of French months, to what appears to have been a struggle with the subjunctive mood and some Anglicisms and *maladresses*. Boulanger never received formal schooling outside of the study of music, and would later lament that this resulted in deficiencies with the written language.<sup>21</sup> And whether due to haste, fatigue, or a sincere struggle to express herself, the letters to Stravinsky contain some errors. Wherever possible, I have attempted to fill these gaps and smooth out the prose. Footnotes indicating editorial choices exist within the English version of the text, but the transcriptions of the French originals, consultable on the companion website, read faithful to the originals, mistakes and all, rather than overburdening the text with [*sic*] markings. Moreover, the significance of these errors extends beyond the question of editorial methodologies. Boulanger's willingness to send incomplete, unpolished letters to Stravinsky speaks to her comfort and candor with the composer. Though the pair never stopped the formal and polite French custom of *vouvoyer*, the errors allowed into the epistolary record are in and of themselves an indication of a certain familiarity on Boulanger's part with the Stravinskys, assuming she herself was aware of the imperfection of her texts.

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21. Interview with Émile Naoumoff, January 10, 2011.

## Chapter Outline

The letters proceed chronologically, beginning with a Christmas card from the Stravinsky family to the Boulangers in 1929 and ending with Boulanger's well-wishes to Théodore and Denise Stravinsky on the anniversary of Igor's death in 1972. The texts between are divided along historical or artistic fault lines. The first two chapters consider the early establishment of Boulanger's dialogue with the Stravinskys through her position as Soulima Stravinsky's music teacher. They progress through the loss of her own mother on March 19, 1935, her involvement with the *Dumbarton Oaks Concerto*, and her role in mourning Stravinsky's lost loved ones—Lyudmila, Catherine, and Anna.

The third chapter concerns the relocation of both Boulanger and Stravinsky to the United States during the Second World War and their subsequent dialogue, including Boulanger's painfully emotional letter of March 17, 1941, which contains a near-transcription of the mental breakdown guilt was causing her to have. The letters from the World War II era are especially moving, with a Europe at war as their backdrop. They also touch upon artistic events such as the publication of Stravinsky's *Poétique musicale*, the post-compositional editing of his Symphony in C, the reorchestration of the "Danse Sacrale" movement of his *Rite of Spring*, and the somewhat fraught premiere of the *Sonata for Two Pianos*. The chapter ends with the letters sent by Boulanger as she prepares to return to Paris and separate from Igor and Vera Stravinsky. They prove especially poignant—and prescient. Boulanger would never again visit with the Stravinskys on American soil. Soulima Stravinsky's letters from France at this time paint an image of newly liberated Paris and Igor Stravinsky's tenuous place within it.

Chapter 4 details Boulanger's return home in 1946 and her interpretation of early reconstruction conditions. She follows Stravinsky's career from afar while also feeding the composer information about his children and new grandchild, Jean. Boulanger makes palpable her frustration and sadness over separating from the Stravinskys of Hollywood, a frustration that serves as a touching foil to the sheer delight she expresses at reuniting with Stravinsky in Venice in September 1951 at the premiere of his opera, *The Rake's Progress*.

In chapter 5, the tone of the dialogue shifts again as Stravinsky begins to redefine himself as a post-tonal composer. His letters, commonly dictated at this point, become colder in tone, and his once-jovial prose becomes infrequent. The chapter ends with correspondence relaying that Stravinsky has had a stroke in Berlin and that Théodore Stravinsky fears for his father's long-term care.

The final chapter presents the closing decades of Stravinsky's life, the concerns of his children over his health and well-being, and Boulanger's adaptation to increasingly fettered access to the composer. The once commanding

and assertive tone of Boulanger's prose takes on a couched, veiled nature after the mid-1950s. From 1969 onward, Boulanger's letters become bifurcated—one stream of missives, sent to Igor, remains supportive if not somewhat stuffy and clichéd; the other stream, sent to Théodore, relays her frustration and increasing despair over the composer's care. While Stravinsky's voice falls from the record, Boulanger's final words mirror her very first letters from the early 1930s as she finds herself supporting Stravinsky's children, celebrating the composer she admired, and defending a music she dearly loved.

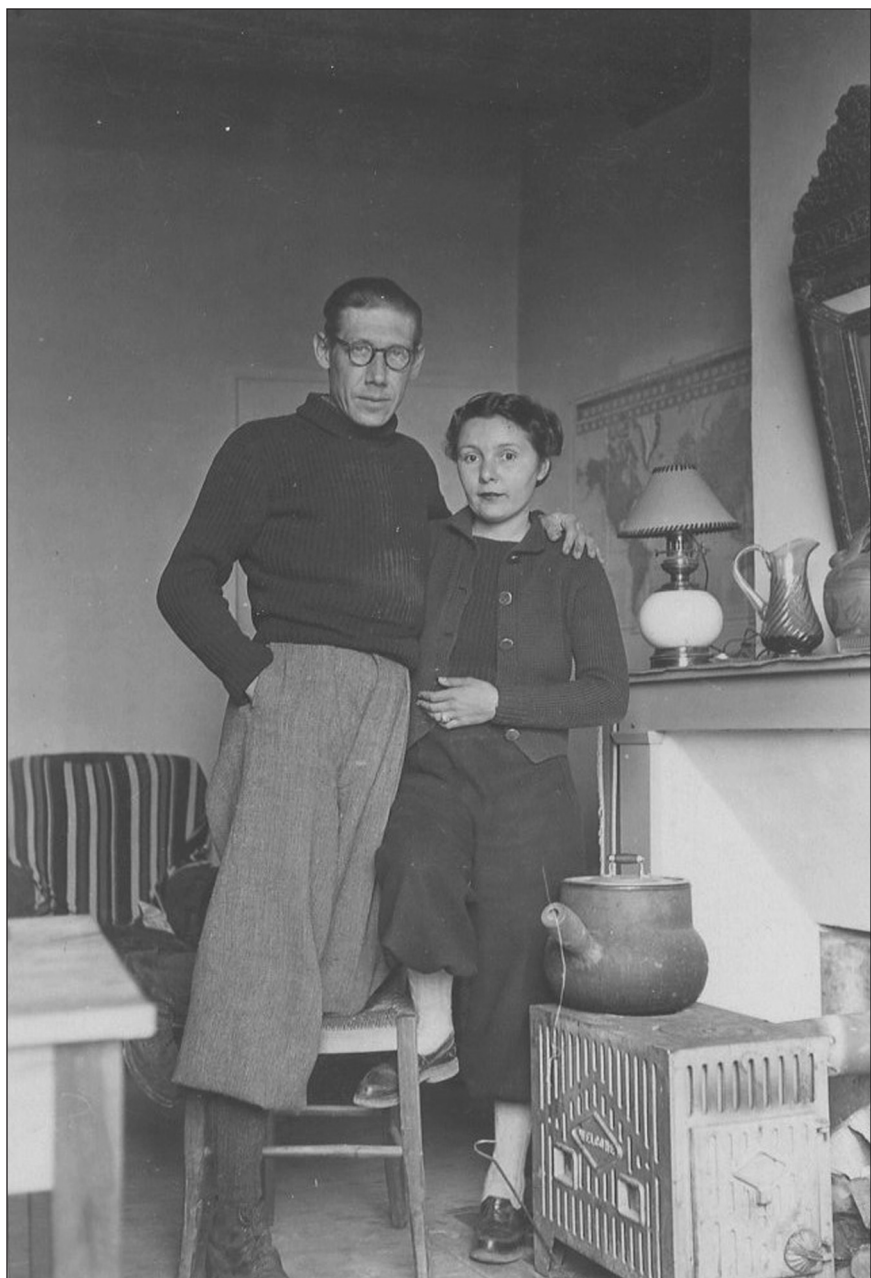


Unknown location, n.d., Boulangier and Stravinsky, contact sheet for unidentified photo shoot (SIS FO 50 001). Reproduced with permission of the Igor Stravinsky Collection, Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel, Switzerland.



Sancellemoz (Haute-Savoie, France) 1939, Milène and Igor Stravinsky with Denise and Théodore Strawinsky (1213 d). © Fondation Théodore Strawinsky. Reproduced with permission.





Magnanac (Haute-Garonne, France) 1941, Théodore et Denise Strawinsky (1284).  
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Villars (Vaud, Suisse) 1957, in back, the Prince of Monaco, in the foreground, Boulanger and Théodore Strawinsky, the day of Boulanger's seventieth birthday (1950). © Fondation Théodore Strawinsky. Reproduced with permission.



Hollywood, California, 1945, Boulanger and Stravinsky sitting on “her couch.” Inscriptions written by Boulanger and Stravinsky are for Winifred Johnstone, administrator for the Lili Boulanger Memorial Fund. Author’s collection.

