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Title: Letter from Andrew Carnegie to Mr. Hitchcock

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CARNEGIE, A. TLS 12/13/88



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New York, December 13.
1888.

Dear Mr Hitchcock:

I have delayed replying to yours in regard to the Madison Square project until I had an opportunity to consult the Directors of both of our Societies, the Oratorio and the Symphony. The former had their meeting here last night. - I have now seen most of those interested in music, including the President of the Philharmonic Society, who is also Vice-President of our Oratorio Society.

The general opinion may be summed up thus. - If your people decide to go forward and build a suitable Music-Hall they will gladly co-operate with you and give the benefit of their experience. The plans of the Hall proposed would be modified by our experts if their opinion was taken. It is a good old-fashioned plan; but the newer Halls of semi-circular form are infinitely to be preferred. So they say, and speak of several Halls recently constructed to prove this.

The Musical Society people would also give up any intention of building a Music Hall for themselves if your people decided to proceed.

If you do not proceed and they are called upon to build a Hall for themselves, they will locate it much farther

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up-town, although they are unanimous in saying that ^a suitable Hall built on Madison-Square and 26th St. would answer admirably and be certain to secure their patronage, and also pay handsomely.

The estimates made show that such a Hall would pay from 15 to 18 per cent. upon total cost of land and buildings. Making due allowances for sanguine expectations, it is, I think, not to be doubted but that it would yield a handsome income. I do not find any of our people desirous of investing in your larger scheme. If your people wish the co-operation of the Musical Societies, I suggest it might readily be done in this way. —

First, the Harlem Railway Company, owner of mortgage upon the whole property, to release 100 by 200 feet on Madison Avenue. This would then be fully paid and there would be no difficulty in obtaining ~~a~~ mortgage for the necessary amount to build the Hall. The remainder of your plans might be held in abeyance until the Hall was finished, and proved the handsome investment which it promises. This does not require you to invest much if any additional capital, and it would secure for your property one of the most important elements of society, the musical. Please advise me of your intention at an early day. No movement shall be taken up by any of our Societies until your decision is known, as we are all desirous not to antagonise but to co-operate with you.

Very truly yours,
Andrew Carnegie