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The Pinschofs as patrons at home: Belmont, Studley Hall and Hohe Warte

Herr Carl Ludwig Pinschof (1855–1926) was an Austrian-born merchant, industrialist, economist, art patron and former consul for Austro-Hungary in Victoria. His wife, Elise Wiedermann-Pinschof (1851–1922), was a feted Viennese soprano and the first teacher of singing at the University Conservatorium of Music in Melbourne.¹ Theirs was a remarkable story of endeavour to enrich the cultural life of Melbourne during the late-Victorian and Edwardian period.

This article brings to life an unknown yet significant period in the history of these continental European-born patrons of art and music when the Pinschofs lived at the large property, Belmont, facing Studley Park Rd, Kew, from 1894–1900.² It identifies the Pinschof's residency at Belmont for the first time, and surveys the historic context of the Studley Park area before, during, and after the Pinschof's residency at Belmont. Further, the article considers some of the circumstances behind the rise of the Pinschofs as ambassadors of art, culture and industry. As well as Belmont, the Pinschof residences in Windsor (Heliantus), their country property at Mount Macedon (Hohe Warte), and their other Kew residence, Studley Hall, are brought into the picture.

Throughout the 1890s and early 1900s, Carl Pinschof was an enthusiastic patron of artists working in Australia, including Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton, Carl Kahler, Ambrose Patterson and Bertram Mackennal. He adopted

Australia as his home after serving as the honorary secretary for Austrian (Austro-Hungarian) arts and industries at the 1879 Sydney International Exhibition, and a representative agent for Austrian arts and industries at the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition. Representation at the 1881 Adelaide Exhibition followed. Marrying Elise Wiedermann in Melbourne in 1883, Pinschof soon established the home in Windsor and the Mount Macedon property.

An advocate and policy planner for the financial and cultural development of Australia, Pinschof was a leading member of the German-speaking community. He officiated at functions at the German Club in Melbourne and encouraged visiting official guests' understanding of the enthusiasm felt by German and Austrian residents for their adopted land.³ He cut a striking figure in his uniform as the consul of Austria-Hungary as part of the official procession that walked down the Grand Avenue of Nations at Melbourne's Centennial Exhibition in 1888.⁴

The Pinschof residences in Studley Park Rd, Kew, which was a boulevard of estate mansions, followed their establishment of homes at Windsor and Mount Macedon. Elevated above the Studley Park nature reserve and set back from the Yarra River, many mansions in the district had sweeping views of Hobson's Bay, the Macedon Ranges, the city and its spawning suburbs. But it has remained unknown to art, social and cultural historians that prior to the Pinschof's celebrated residency from 1900 at Studley Hall (formerly Waverley), they had earlier lived in Studley Park Rd at the large, adjacent property, Belmont, at a time when Pinschof focused on collecting contemporary Australian art.

Belmont's exteriors and interiors were photographed as a family record of the Pinschof's success in Australia and these photographs also include images of him, his wife, their three daughters – Carmen, Elizabeth and Louise – relatives and guests. Bound into a drawing room album, it was acquired at auction in London in the later 20th century and is now in an Australian private collection. These images depict this earlier residency at Belmont and may be seen as symbols of established Europeans living in Melbourne, whose aspirations marked the transplanting of continental cultural values to a British colonial city. In many ways, the Pinschof's subsequent move to Studley Hall, with its large ballroom for entertainments, was a further marker on the social register and immediately anticipated Melbourne's position as the provisional capital of a federated Australian nation.⁵

After Carl Pinschof's death in 1926, Theodore Fink, the newspaper proprietor, politician, arts patron and essayist, wrote that Pinschof:

entertained artists and people of letters and distinction in a princely way, and Studley Hall, with its noble apartments furnished with works of art, was the meeting ground of folk of thought and culture.⁶

Yet, this largesse was true also of the Pinschofs' life at Belmont, when Carl Pinschof began acquiring the works of young Australian artists, and Madame Pinschof consolidated her career as a leading teacher of singing, a hostess of musical concerts and an acclaimed performing artist.

Belmont was demolished in 1936 and the land subdivided, erasing both its presence and history.⁷ The residence was almost certainly built around 1870 after the subdivision of 18 acres, then owned by the early Melbourne 'squatter' capitalist and legislator William Degraives, into five-, four- and two-acre blocks.⁸ It appears that Degraives picked out (or could not sell) the sloping and wooded site next to what became Belmont, but which he never developed. The extensive site bounding Belmont became the land on which the large Old English and Queen Anne styled mansion Dalswraith (now Campion College) was built in 1906, on the opposite side of Studley Park Rd to Raheen (formerly Knowsley) and across Hodgson St where the mansion Waverley was built on 10 acres. The Pinschofs occupied Waverley from 1900, changing its name to Studley Hall.⁹

When the Pinschofs lived at Belmont from 1894, the mansion contained a large drawing room and dining room on the ground floor, a breakfast room, a billiard room and a library. On the first floor were 11 bedrooms and two bathrooms, separate quarters for the servants, and service areas. Outhouses included stables, a coach house, a harness and man's room, a gardener's cottage and storerooms. The mansion sat on four acres that contained a large landscaped garden of lawns and shrubbery, a vegetable garden, fruit trees and an orangery. With an extensive frontage to Studley Park Rd, this property was, according to advertising notices, 'one of the finest sites in this deservedly popular metropolitan suburb'.¹⁰

From Indigenous land to elite colonial scenery - the development of Studley Park

Like many elite suburban areas of Melbourne, the Studley Park Rd vicinity resulted from social engineering. For decades, this area atop the wooded Studley Park reserve, which was physically removed from and elevated above the city and manufacturing industries, had cachet as the residence of successful and aspiring businessmen, professionals and parliamentarians. For thousands of years it was the land of the Wurundjeri, an Aboriginal clan using the Woiwurrung language.¹¹ According to James Bonwick, a mid-19th-

century historian of the Port Phillip District and Boroondara, Aborigines held corroborees at Dights Falls, along the Yarra River towards the eastern side of present day Clifton Hill, and fished there. Historian Francis Barnard, in his *Jubilee History of Kew* (1910), recounted that the large area across Glenferrie Rd skirting Xavier, the Jesuit college for senior boys, was another former site for corroborees. Aborigines, for Barnard, were ‘picturesque’ and those surviving were the remnants of a race whose colour was being bred into civilised whiteness: ‘They once camped along the northern side of Studley Park Road on their journeys between Corranderrk and town’.¹² When the Pinschofs took up residence at Belmont, the Wurundjeri had long gone, removed from and dispossessed of their Yarra Yarra lands.

As early as the 1850s, Studley Park had gained prominence as an elite area and, for some residents, it paralleled in charm and situation the seaside suburb of St Kilda: ‘Kew is unquestionably the prettiest place out of the dust of Melbourne’, Bonwick wrote, ‘It can boast also, of an aristocracy as well as St Kilda’.¹³ Leonard Terry, the architect of the prestigious Melbourne Club, built in 1858, designed the symmetrical, classical revival, bluestone-based mansion Clutha in Studley Park Rd, the residence of John Carson, the second mayor of Kew, which was built in 1856.¹⁴ The mansion, situated on over eight and a half acres in 1875, featured a return, arched veranda erected on cast-iron columns facing Mount Macedon, and a large drawing room fitted with ‘massive spandrels and statuary’ and large marble fireplaces.¹⁵ In 1859, Sir William Stawell, chief justice of the new colony of Victoria, built his large bluestone residence d’Estaville on nearly 32 acres of land. Designed by Kerr and Knight, architects of Melbourne’s Parliament House, its sombre classical revival style had some picturesque detailing. Stawell’s property was heavily wooded, with a fern gully sweeping down to the banks of the Yarra. To the west of d’Estaville was Studley Park and to the east stretched undulating forest. To the north-east in the late 1850s lay the large farms of Kilby, Willsmere and Belford, stretching towards Burke Rd, the eastern boundary of the Borough of Boroondara.¹⁶

By 1876, property advertisers boasted the extent of Studley Park’s bounty and noted the many mansions already built there, Belmont amongst them:

Studley-park is acknowledged to be the finest situation for a residence in and around Melbourne and from its elevated position, gravelly soil, and other natural advantages, it enjoys an exceptionally pure and salubrious atmosphere, entirely free from dust. No better proof of this can be had than that it has been selected as sites for such mansions as Waverley, Studley-house, Belmont, Clutha, Villa Alba, &c.¹⁷

The area around Studley Park reserve became a haven for picnicking, swimming and boating, and for artists to sketch and paint. Following on from Nicholas Chevalier, Walter Withers and Frederick McCubbin sketched and painted there during the 1870s, before the artists' camps at Box Hill and Heidelberg of the 1880s were established. McCubbin reminisced: 'I remember it as if it were yesterday, standing one evening a long time ago, watching the sunset glowing on the trees in Studley Park'.¹⁸ He also recalled picnicking there as a child with his family, and the area was the setting for one of his paintings, *Picnic at Studley Park* in 1885.¹⁹ Carl Pinschof purchased Australian artist Ambrose Patterson's small oil panel *Yarra, Kew* (also known as *The Yarra River near Kew*) c. 1897, for his art collection at Belmont, further indicting the popularity of this area for artists.

Belmont and Carl Pinschof's interests in business and art

Carl Pinschof was an entrepreneur. His move from Windsor to Belmont positioned him amongst many wealthy Melbourne citizens during a period of severe economic instability, which eased towards the end of the century. He retained his property in Windsor and his Mount Macedon residence and, by 1895, he had purchased Belmont.²⁰ Sent to Sydney in 1879 to represent Austria (Austro-Hungary) at the International Exhibition,²¹ he returned to Vienna where he became engaged to the celebrated Viennese soprano Elise Wiedermann, before travelling to Melbourne to represent Austrian manufactures, including the famed Thonet bentwood industries, at the International Exhibition in 1880.²² In July 1881, Pinschof represented Austria at the Adelaide International Exhibition, which showcased mainly 'ornamental articles and works of art'. His future business partner Alfred Pfaff, then a partner in Pfaff, Reichenbach & Co., of Sydney, Melbourne and Vienna, exhibited 'fancy and ornamental' woodenwares.²³ By the time he married Wiedermann, Pinschof had lived for six months in Sydney and six months in Adelaide, settling in Melbourne to open a large agency and importing business with Pfaff as Pfaff, Pinschof & Co.²⁴ Appointed consul for the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Victoria in early 1886, Pfaff, Pinschof & Co. had branches in Melbourne, Adelaide, Sydney and Brisbane by 1893 and remained the long-standing agents for the Austrian Lloyd's Steam Navigation Co.²⁵

Pfaff, Pinschof & Co.'s Court at the Adelaide International and Jubilee Exhibition in 1887 was highly commended. Occupying over 600 square metres, this large importing firm exhibited products from Italy, Germany, Austria, France, Britain and the Pacific including rubbers, inks, powders,



'Studley Hall', Studley Park, Kew. The residence of the Austro-Hungarian Consul, Melbourne, printed postcard, c. 1904. JT Meade Postcard Collection, Pictures Collection H33673/89

dyes, plain and decorated papers, farming and garden equipment, tinned butter, champagnes, Irish jute products, South Sea island products, perfumes, bohemian glass and decorative objects, German concert grand pianos and a large selection of Thonet furniture. Covering over 180 square metres, this Thonet display comprised 'a rich assortment of their well-made, upholstered and unupholstered furniture', the reporter going on to enumerate the gold medals received by Thonet at the international exhibitions in Sydney, London, Paris, Vienna, Amsterdam and Moscow.²⁶ Another large display followed at the Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888, including Thonet bentwood furniture.²⁷ The *Argus* reported that its relative cheapness and the furniture's suitability to Australia's climate had made it popular throughout the colonies since the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition. The new upholstered Gothic range, which was illustrated in the firm's catalogue for 1888, centred the court, and indicates that Pinschof promoted the latest Thonet designs from Vienna.²⁸ The *Argus* report for the Austro-Hungarian Court at this exhibition also described the large Thonet exhibit and Thonet's Austrian competitor in the production of bentwood, J & J Kohn, whose Melbourne

agent was Messrs Schmedes, Erbslöh & Co. But Pfaff, Pinschof & Co. received immediate consideration:

Messrs. Thonet must first claim attention, as their goods are first seen on entering the court. This firm have two factories in Bohemia, one in Hungary and one in Poland, and have agencies all over the world, their Melbourne representatives being Messrs. Pfaff, Pinschof & Co., of Flinders Lane.²⁹

Also exhibited by Pfaff, Pinschof & Co. at the Adelaide Industrial Exhibition in 1891, Thonet was singled out by the press as 'goods designed with considerable taste'.³⁰

Although not directly affecting the Pinschofs financially, the circumstances behind Carl Pinschof and his family vacating Heliantus in Windsor and taking up Belmont at Studley Park was probably linked to the crash in property values during the depression of the early 1890s. Previously owned by Dr Le Fevre, a member of the Victorian Legislative Council, Belmont was auctioned in early 1892 after Le Fevre's death in late 1891.³¹ Le Fevre's furniture and decorative arts were auctioned off first,³² followed by the auction of the property later that year; it was advertised for lease in late 1892 and again in 1893.³³ In 1894, Belmont was again advertised for lease and the Pinschofs occupied the residence towards the end of that year after Gemmell and Tuckett listed it as a 'Family Mansion/ Billiard and ball rooms/ stabling/ land four acres/ Magnificent views/ Nominal Rent'.³⁴ As consul for Austria and Hungary, Carl Pinschof and his wife held a large ball at Heliantus in April 1894 for the officers of the *Fasana* and *Kriesser*, the Austrian and Russian men-of-war. One of the last entertainments the Pinschofs held before moving to Belmont, this ball hosted Baron von Mueller, the mayor of Melbourne, the consul for Germany Herr Brahe, the consul for Denmark, the consul for Russia, Lady Madden and Alfred Pfaff and his family. Many other notable military, professional and society figures attended.³⁵

Belmont is listed as Pinschof's private residence in directories throughout the second half of the 1890s and these also show that, by 1896, Alfred Pfaff's family residence was at Waverley, the large property across Hodgson St, Studley Park.³⁶ It is not coincidental that Pfaff also made this move to Studley Park. As well as business partners, he and Pinschof were neighbours at Windsor. Elise Pinschof's sister Antonia, who came to Australia with her other sibling Aloisia (Louise) after Elise married Carl Pinschof, had married Alfred Pfaff.³⁷ In his role of consul for Peru, Pfaff entertained lavishly at Waverley in the mid-to-late 1890s.³⁸

Waverley, like many mansions built in the area, underwent changes over the decades. Dr Le Fevre was reported as living at Waverley in 1889. This property was renamed Studley Hall after Madame Pinschof purchased the property and Pfaff vacated.

At home at Belmont

In January 1895, Madame Pinschof notified *Table Talk* that her 'At Homes' at Belmont would be on the second Tuesday and second Wednesday of each month.³⁹ The press reported on the large musical gatherings hosted by the Pinschofs at Belmont throughout the late 1890s,⁴⁰ but the success of her position on the social register was marked by the first extraordinary 'At Home' that she held for over 200 guests in the early winter of 1896. 'Mrs CA Pinschof, wife of the consul for Austria-Hungary gave a party at her residence, Belmont, Studley-park, Kew on Saturday, June 13', the *Australasian* reported. Receiving guests in the hall, Madame Pinschof directed them to:

the various reception rooms, whose walls are hung with fine pictures and interesting photographs of notable singers. In the garden a band played, and croquet and archery were arranged on the lawns. In doors there was an excellent concert.⁴¹

The hundreds of guests comprised the Melbourne establishment: Pinschof brought together the Clarkes, the Sargoods, the Pfaffs, the mayor and mayoress of Melbourne, the Wrixens, Madame Pfund, the clergy, the Jewry, the German consul and elite members of the German community, Sir Frederick McCoy, the Buckleys, the Snowdens, Professor George WL Marshall-Hall, the artist and critic Tom Carrington, and a host of other members of the Melbourne social, diplomatic, business and artistic register. Indeed, the cultural mix indicates the cosmopolitan spirit with which the Pinschofs enriched Melbourne's bourgeois life. Amongst the sopranos was Nancy Elmhurst Goode, who studied art at the National Gallery School and singing under Madame Pinschof at the University Conservatorium. Elmhurst Goode remained a life-long friend of Tom Roberts, whom she had met at the Gallery School, along with Frederick McCubbin, Bertram Mackennal, Charles Douglas Richardson and Louis Abrahams, when she was 'very much a junior' at the art school in the early 1880s.⁴²

Some of the pictures lining the walls at Belmont must have been works by Carl Kahler, whom Pinschof patronised before the artist's departure for America in 1891. A society artist, Kahler attempted to make a living out of painting portraits of the Melbourne gentry, including his oil of Carl Pinschof's

friend Herr Brahe, the German consul, which he painted in 1887 for the German Club, of which the Pinschofs were prominent members.⁴³ Famously, Kahler painted the celebrated Melbourne Cup series, which Pinschof, Pfaff & Co., as the series copyright holders, issued as reproductive prints, produced to exacting standards by Goupil & Cie in Paris.⁴⁴ Marketed and sold around the Australian colonies in the late 1880s and early 1890s, the prints marked the high tide of Melbourne's boom and speculative excess in the name of progressive materialism and colonial civilisation.

Built in brick with piebald moulded facings, Belmont was designed in a picturesque Gothic Tudorbethan style of the late 1860s, featuring at its front three large gabled bays with an arched entrance door fathomed by two projecting bay windows. A large iron-columned verandah stretched along the first two storeys of the front façade, ornamented with a cast-iron balcony railing on the upper tier. Some of the photographs taken for the Pinschof album (c. 1897) show Carl Pinschof and his three daughters standing on the large lawn at the side of the residence with Madame Pinschof, friends and relatives also in some of the frames. Well-established and standing assured, Pinschof transplanted a European cultural patrimony to Australia. This album of exterior and interior views was surely created to travel abroad; a record of a prosperous family living under the British Empire in Australia.

The large music room featured the concert grand piano at one end with an array of fashionable cane and wicker chairs scattered throughout. The wallpapers were of the highest quality and featured a stylised patterned dado, a large fill area with a complimentary stylised pattern, and no upper frieze. Felt-like fabric covered the floor, which was scattered with middle-eastern and skin rugs. The bay window facing the direction of Studley Park Rd featured a banquet box seat upholstered in gathered fabric and laid with cushions. A large Japanese embroidered screen stood by the door, which in the photograph is opened to show the painted door panels. This overall effect presented the lighter style of furnishings of the late 1890s, including a modern version of the Thebes stool, first introduced in 1884 by Liberty & Co., in London. This unpretentious salon was used by Madame Pinschof for rehearsals and musical concerts and was further decorated with grasses and foliage from Belmont's gardens. Pictures and photographs of musicians lined the walls, as they did in the large dining room with its overmantel flanked by photographs of the Emperor Franz Joseph I and Empress Elisabeth of Austria and Queen consort of Hungary.⁴⁵

Pinschof later acquired a marble bust of this Empress, murdered in 1898



Left: Carl Pinschof and an unidentified guest with the three Pinschof daughters at Belmont, Studley Park, Kew, eastern elevation in garden yard [Elise Pinschof is on the upper balcony], c. 1897



Right: Louise, Elizabeth and Carmen [at right with cockatoo] at Belmont, north-eastern elevation, c. 1897



Left: Dining room at Belmont, southern view, c. 1897



Right: Aunt Louise's and Louise's room, Belmont, with Thonet bentwood furniture imported by Pfaff, Pinschof & Co., c. 1897

Photographs private collection, images courtesy of Mrs Joyce Evans

in Switzerland,⁴⁶ which he displayed in front of a vase of the Empress's favourite flowers, forget-me-nots, arranged by his wife in her memory. Curtains throughout Belmont were fashionably hung from poles without pelmet boxes, and the fabrics were printed with stylised designs. Some of the bedrooms were furnished with Thonet bentwood furniture, brass beds, Japanese screens, ebonised and gilt overmantels, and fashionable bric-a-brac. Again, a felt-like fabric covered these floors, scattered with Middle Eastern rugs. Situated at the front of Belmont with access to the verandah overlooking views to Collingwood, Hobson's Bay and the Macedon Ranges, the effect of these interiors was light and airy.

Patronage and performance

By 1896, Carl Pinschof's collection at Belmont included three paintings by Arthur Streeton: *At Coogee* (also known as *The Long Wave Coogee*), '*The gentleness of heaven is on the sea*' and *From My Camp (Sirius Cove)*, which were acquired from Streeton's *Sydney Sunshine Exhibition* held in Melbourne between late November and early December that year to raise money for his much anticipated departure for England.⁴⁷ Four years earlier, Streeton had moved to Sydney and joined artist Tom Roberts at Curlew Camp, an artist, writer and bachelor camp on Sirius Cove, then a rugged, bushy coastal setting on the inner north shore of Sydney harbour. *At Coogee* has the vigorous spirit of Streeton's painting before his departure for England in early 1897. Exploiting the long and narrow horizontal format of the wood panel support, Streeton's composition shows a hazy grey-pink sky under which an azure-coloured sea builds up to a long, breaking, white-crested wave that rolls towards the expanse of warm, oatmeal-coloured sand in the foreground. Flicks and daubs of vivid colour further enliven this work. Despite its many enthusiasts in Melbourne, Streeton's *Sydney Sunshine Exhibition* had its detractors, making Pinschof's purchases enlightened.⁴⁸ Years later Streeton recalled Pinschof's patronage at this exhibition:

Carl Pinschof, the Austrian Consul, one of my first patrons in Melbourne, bought a number of pictures from this show, going round and marking the catalogue with a blue pencil without looking at the prices. I said to myself, 'My God, I'm going [to England] now all right'.⁴⁹

Another purchase from Streeton followed when the artist sent work to Melbourne from London to sell. Pinschof purchased Streeton's watercolour *Street Scene Cairo* from 1897,⁵⁰ adding to his art collection at Belmont.

The Pinschof's support of Streeton lasted well into the early 20th century.



Left: *Music room at Belmont, northern view, c. 1897*

Right: *Music room at Belmont, southern view, c. 1897*

Photographs private collection, images courtesy of Mrs Joyce Evans

In early 1907, for example, Streeton was a guest at Hohe Warte, the Pinschof's fine weatherboard Mount Macedon estate property. The surrounding nine acres included a tennis court and pavilion, flowerbeds, fruit trees and a kitchen garden. Deciduous trees and pines planted by the Pinschofs surrounded the residence, which faced Government Road and had views across to the You Yang ranges. Large adjacent properties belonged to Melbourne's political, mercantile and professional elite.⁵¹ The area had assumed further cachet when the Victorian Government purchased the large estate of *Age* newspaper proprietor and economist David Syme in 1886 on which to build a timber double-storey country cottage for Governor and Lady Loch in the Early English idiom revived by the English architect Richard Norman Shaw and modified for colonial conditions with verandahs and a gabled porch.⁵² Madame Pinschof befriended Lady Loch and sang the role of Senta from Wagner's *The Flying Dutchmen* at an operatic and dramatic entertainment in Melbourne, held to raise funds for the Church of England at Upper Macedon and which the Governor and his wife attended. The rich qualities of Madame Pinschof's voice 'were never heard to greater advantage than last night', praised the *Argus* reviewer.⁵³ Macedon country houses, many of which were owned by members of the audience, had direct architectural associations with both the English country house and the colonial hill stations of India.⁵⁴

When the Pinschofs established Hohe Warte in 1886, the Upper Macedon region included Alton, the residence of the banker, art collector and trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria, Sir George Verdon,⁵⁵ and Derriweit Heights, the residence of Charles Ryan – former pastoralist and father of artist Ellis Rowan. Towards the end of the century Derriweit Heights was extended for the Buckley family into a double-storey Early English residence with a picturesque half-timbered and cemented facade.⁵⁶ The name of Pinschof's

property was associative: Hohe Warte is the name of the hill district outside of Vienna where, in the late-19th century, the wealthy banker and art collector Baron Nathaniel de Rothschild had his large property and gardens, which he opened to the public.⁵⁷

Despite the threat of summer bushfires, the height of Upper Macedon with its invigorating air and cooler temperatures, gardens and sweeping panoramas, approximated – in the minds of the gentry and the visiting writer and historian James Anthony Froude – Sina, the colonial Indian hill station.⁵⁸ Arthur Streeton enjoyed staying at Hohe Warte, working on commissions for the governor's wife Lady Talbot,⁵⁹ and painting oil studies of Hohe Warte and the mountainous area surrounding Pinschof's estate. 'The Australian plain spread out far below our feet', praised Froude in the mid-1880s, who found the nature of Macedon near 'perfection'. The 'horizon forty miles away', he continued, 'the reddish-green of the near eucalyptus softening off into the transparent blue of distance'.⁶⁰ His imagery evokes Streeton's atmospheric landscape *Australia Felix* (1907), which depicts a wide panoramic view from Mount Towrong near Macedon on a hot summer's day.⁶¹ Other studies that Streeton painted around Macedon in 1907 were more impressionistic in treatment, including an oil sketch of Hohe Warte.⁶² A lovely aspect of the property, the house is nestled amongst exotic verdant green trees, shrubs and native grasses painted in mid-green tones. The Pinschof daughters, by then young women, play tennis on the court. In the far right, the red and white of the Austro-Hungarian flag adds an almost imperceptible accent of contrast. Streeton subtly visualises Hohe Warte like a European hillside hamlet and, through this painting, adds a continental flavour to the elite and predominately British-Australian colonial hillside location at Mount Macedon.

Small in size, intimate in composition and shimmering in winter daylight, *Leafy June* is another impressionistic oil painting executed by Streeton at this time. Depicting one of the Pinschof daughters at Hohe Warte, this small study shows her stretched out in a white Edwardian dress and sporting a large, Gainsborough-style hat encircled by flashing red fabric. The figure appears idyllically at ease in a meadow on the property that is overhung with tall pines and Australian eucalyptuses. Streeton thought it was one of the very best small oil studies he had painted and gifted it to the Pinschofs later that year.⁶³ 'It's a rainy morning', Streeton wrote to Tom Roberts from Hohe Warte, telling Roberts about his exhibition of new Australian paintings in Melbourne:

Mrs Pinschof is having her French lesson on the verandah with mademoiselle – Louise is buzzing about with her camera – Elizabeth

sits writing close by & Carmen leans over the piano doing nothing in particular in the most fascinating way possible – Mr Pinschoff has gone down to the office, & it's delightful to sit on the verandah and smoke ... Croquet & tennis, & reading and walking. And the music also ... Pinschoff came to the Gallery 2 days ago, 10 minutes before closing time, & wrote his name on the back of 5 or 6 & 2 0/- are of the best & costly. He hasn't even asked the price –⁶⁴

Elise Pinschoff's connections furthered her husband's patronage. A significant connection, and a great friend of the Pinschofs, was George WL Marshall-Hall, the Ormond Professor of Music at the University of Melbourne. Establishing the Marshall-Hall orchestra at the university, he was credited with encouraging Madame Pinschoff to teach there.⁶⁵ A friend of Streeton, who first painted him in 1892, a year after this Berlin-trained musician arrived from London, Marshall-Hall was a Wagnerian enthusiast, who captured the spirit of the *fin-de-siècle* European interest in Wagnerian symbolism. He excelled as a Wagnerian conductor and Madame Pinschoff and Marshall-Hall performed concerts of Wagner excerpts in the Melbourne Town Hall throughout the early 1890s.⁶⁶ In 1894, amongst other items, she sang from *Tristan and Isolde*, which was played by Marshall-Hall's orchestra 'with becoming pathos', and she was twice recalled to the stage to receive floral tributes.⁶⁷ 'Never have I heard that divine passage in the love scene from *Tristan* ... sung with more understanding, more poetic insight, more inspiration,' Marshall-Hall publicly declared about Madame Pinschoff's operatic powers.⁶⁸

Nearly a century later the musicologist Thèrèse Radic wrote that Marshall-Hall was a 'flesh and blood bohemian who believed passionately in art and God not at all'.⁶⁹ An advocate of expressive contemporary art, Marshall-Hall believed in the 'innerness' of the artist and artists' abilities to talk about their work with more clarity than a critic.⁷⁰ Indeed, Marshall-Hall stayed with Streeton at Curlew Camp throughout the 1890s, and shared a residence with him in St Kilda, Melbourne, in 1892.⁷¹ In 1900 Madame Pinschoff came to Marshall-Hall's defence, criticising the hostilities he had faced for nearly two years for his outspokenness and claims for free speech in the face of propriety and moral conventions: 'The professor is doing here work as pathfinder – a difficult task' she implored the University of Melbourne council. 'We have no traditions, no leisured class', she rallied:

The pre-dominance of money-making instincts, and the complete absence of outside stimulants, are a severe handicap. An artist must create atmosphere ... I honestly think it is almost impossible to find a musician,

a good musician, combining the powers, of musician, organiser and lecturer. In my life I found only two – Wagner and Bulow – and Marshall Hall makes a good third.⁷²

Madame Pinschof's references for singers were impeccable and it is well known that she gave Nellie Melba (then Mrs Armstrong) a letter of introduction to the great German-born, mezzo-soprano Mathilde Marchesi at her school in Paris in the mid-1880s. 'Beloved teacher, I send you [Adelina] Patti's successor', Pinschof wrote to her former teacher in Vienna.⁷³

Hugh Ramsay and Tom Roberts

The Australian artist Hugh Ramsay was a part of the Pinschof's circle through his romantic attachment to Lischen (Lovie) Muller, his young art student. She was the daughter of the German scholar Frederick Muller and the German countess Wilhelmina von Zuener, who eloped to Australia in the 1880s.⁷⁴ Frederick Muller was the private tutor to the Pinschof girls and his son, Lischen's younger brother Fritz, was a boy pianist virtuoso. Whilst living at Belmont, Madame Pinschof sang to his accompaniment at Fritz Muller's benefit concert at the Melbourne Town Hall in June 1899. In that year Ramsay began his painting *Consolation*, completed in 1902, and used Lischen Muller as the model for the young goddess in this painting.⁷⁵ Ramsay must have visited the Pinschofs at Belmont after Lischen had befriended the Pinschof daughters through her father, and prior to the Pinschof's move to Studley Hall.

There is no evidence to suggest that Ramsay's art was patronised by the Pinschofs, but their patronage of Tom Roberts is well known. The Pinschofs were introduced to Roberts in Sydney by Nancy Elmhurst Goode, Elise Pinschof's student and subsequently her chief assistant at the Melbourne Conservatorium.⁷⁶ Elmhurst Goode was later a live-in governess to the Pinschof girls at Studley Hall.⁷⁷ In Sydney in September 1895, Madame Pinschof performed at the concert of the young Australian-born virtuoso violinist Johann Secundus Kruse, who was visiting Australia after studying and performing in Europe for ten years with the Joachim Quartet.⁷⁸ Using her professional name of Madame Elise Wiedermann, she sang to much acclaim at Kruse's concert in a packed Melbourne Town Hall in August 1895.⁷⁹ As the *Sydney Morning Herald* music critic reported:

Mme. Elise Wiedermann, in particular, is a fine singer. It was quite refreshing to hear the Brahms 'lieder' sung in the refined manner of the best German school, and the vocal style of the Tannhauser aria



Left: Tom Roberts, *Elise Pinschof Wiederman*, 1899, pastel, 92.5 x 58.5 cm. Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 195.1991. Bequest of Mrs Elizabeth Finley, 1979. Image AGNSW
Right: Arthur Streeton, *Leafy June*, 1907, oil on panel, 23.9 x 18.5 cm. Image courtesy of Mossgreen, Melbourne

was of that chastened character which so well expresses the spirit of Wagner's music.⁸⁰

It was Madame Pinschof's Sydney premiere and she continued to sing in the Kruse program throughout this season, which included Gounod's *Ave Maria*.⁸¹

According to Elmhurst Goode, Roberts was commissioned to make a portrait of Elise Pinschof when the family were again in Sydney in 1899.⁸² The fine pastel portrait was created in Roberts' studio and depicts Madame Pinschof standing in three-quarter profile with her arms placed behind her. With the assured presence of an accomplished performer, she looks at the viewer knowingly, her upper torso is accentuated, adding further command to her presence as a leading dramatic soprano. Her coiffure is swept into a chignon, with curls resting against her high forehead. The effect suggests Madame Pinschof's performance of Bizet's *Carmen*, which was foremost in her repertoire for the European continental and London stages. (The eponymous title of that opera was the inspiration behind the naming of her eldest daughter who, in the footsteps of her mother, went on to become a feted soprano on

the European stage.) Appropriately, Roberts added the words ‘Con Amore’ to his signature at lower right, the Italian musical term meaning ‘with love’, and the date ‘5.5.1899’.

Roberts delighted in rendering Madame Pinschof’s costume and emphasising its decorative detail. He knew that the Society press exhaustively listed the details of women’s dresses, almost transforming women into decorative art. For one of Madame Pinschof’s At Homes at Belmont she was reported as wearing: ‘a skirt of black crepon and bodice of black satin brocaded with pink’.⁸³ In his portrait, the finely embroidered black net is layered over an under gown of delicate flesh-pink satin. In the pastel portrait highlights, blended surfaces and tonal depths are expertly layered. The picture has no literal background references and its dark, russet brown, blended with sections of black, throws Madame Pinschof into relief.

Roberts’s pastel portrait *Carmen and Elizabeth Pinschof* was created around the time that the Pinschofs moved from Belmont to Studley Hall, and was commissioned by Madame Pinschof for her husband’s birthday celebrated in April 1900. With a moody intimacy, this portrait suggests the inner worlds of the two teenage girls and evokes both introspective reverie and intellectual curiosity about the wider world. Roberts portrays the long, flowing hair of Carmen falling across her shoulders with a silken lustre, in front of the more shadowy face of Elizabeth to her rear. The sisters’ faces show the dark beauty of their immediate central European ancestry and their lips are smoothly moulded in deep shell pink.

In the ‘Big Picture’ and Studley Hall

Nancy Elmhurst Goode recalled the support that Carl Pinschof gave to Tom Roberts when he was working on his ‘Big Picture’, the *Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia*, before Roberts left Melbourne to complete it in London in March 1903. Indeed, Pinschof was one of the first notables to sit for Roberts in his studio at the Exhibition Buildings in Melbourne after the first Commonwealth Parliament was opened by the Duke and Duchess of York in 1901, and the Federationist Sir Edmund Barton became Australia’s first prime minister.⁸⁴ Roberts often visited the Pinschofs at Studley Hall on his way to the Exhibition Buildings, ‘for a smoke, a yarn, and a game of billiards, thus sealing a lasting friendship’.⁸⁵ Pinschof acted as a kind of secretary to Roberts in undertaking the monumental work involved in completing the Big Picture, and he relieved the artist of administrative burden. In this role, Pinschof advised Roberts to sign an agreement with the Australian Art Association Pty Ltd, giving this body the copyright to sell

photoengravings of the final painting,⁸⁶ which were produced by Goupil & Cie in Paris in 1903.

By this time, Pinschhof had purchased Bertram Mackennal's bronze, French-cast sculpture *Circe* and this patronage was coupled in the press with praise for his wife's musical performance, and her organisation of large musical events.⁸⁷ Indeed, a dashing Herr Pinschhof, dressed as the consul for Austria-Hungary, flanks the left corner of the Big Picture and stands above Herr Brahe, consul for Germany, and Arthur Ware, the mayor of Adelaide. Madame Pinschhof centres the composition in the middle distance and she is discernable standing near Frederick McCubbin to her right within an area of relatively indistinguishable faces. The faces of many wives of the Victorian British gentry and political world are registered in the near foreground. But the Pinschofs appearance in Roberts's monumental painting was the artist's tribute; according to Elmhurst Goode they hosted a dinner for Roberts at Studley Hall before his departure for England, and also, the night before he left Melbourne, he came to say farewell.⁸⁸

Unlike Belmont, no photographs of Studley Hall's interiors during the Pinschofs's residency between 1900 and 1916 have surfaced. But their grandeur is glimpsed in an *Argus* report from 1905:

The Consul for Austria and Mme. Pinschhof gave a reception at Studley Hall, Kew, on June 30 in honour of Commander Ludwig Ritter von Hohnel and the officers of *Panther*. It was the most perfectly arranged and brilliant social function that has been given in Melbourne for years, and many of those present remarked that it reminded them of the reception given at the Federal Government House during the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales and on the occasion of King Edward's coronation. The large entrance hall has at the further end a very fine ballroom, and at the head of the marble steps ascending to it Herr Carl Pinschhof and Mme Pinschhof stood to receive the guests ... Those who did not join [found] themselves much to interest them in the brilliantly lighted white and gold drawing-room and the library, where fine paintings and works of art were worthy of admiration.⁸⁹

When Nellie Armstrong returned to Australia as the internationally renowned Madame Nellie Melba in late 1902, the Pinschofs attended her first night at the Melbourne Town Hall,⁹⁰ and hosted her at Studley Hall after one of her season's concerts. For a wedding present in 1909, Melba gave Carmen Pinschhof a brooch consisting of 'an uncommon star with a beautiful Queensland golden sapphire in the centre surrounded firstly by a band of white enamel then by points of stars and diamonds'.⁹¹ Carl Pinschofs's gift to

Carmen, also an accomplished singer, reflected his cultural interests, being 'a cheque, a piano and a beautiful Turkish carpet'.⁹²

With the outbreak of the war, Pinschof, although not interned, was forced to retreat from public life. He resigned his company directorships and the family returned to live at Heliantus in Windsor. Pinschof left Melbourne for an extended visit abroad in 1926 and died in South Africa. His body was brought to Melbourne for burial in the Boroondara cemetery,⁹³ beside the body of his wife who had died in 1922.

The war years also marked the beginning of the end of the era of family mansions and great estates in the Studley Park area. During and immediately after the First World War, mansions were difficult to sell and some became private hospitals, schools or boarding houses. Many mansions, including Belmont, were demolished in the 20th century's inter- and post-war periods and the land subdivided and sold. The mansion estates of Rockingham, Findon, Fernhurst, Oakwood, Mooroolbeek, Blythswood, Tara Hall, Banool, Mona, Iveagh, Iona, Clutha, Sharland and Belmont are long gone from this once elite suburban scenery. Solid middle-class houses replaced them, which resulted from Melbourne's population growth, social and economic changes, motor traffic, and real estate development. In an area that retained its residential status, the names of courts, roads and streets are the vestiges of some of these Studley Park mansions. But there is no reminder of Belmont – a former home of leading cosmopolitan patrons of art and music, the Pinschofs.