FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 24, 2017
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NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC LEON LEVY DIGITAL ARCHIVES

THE TOSCANINI ERA, 1925–1945

Fifth Release of Material in a Multi-Year Project Funded by the LEON LEVY FOUNDATION

Marked Scores, Home Movie Clips, Contracts, and More
Released in Celebration of Toscanini’s 150th Birthday

“Toscanini at 150: The Maestro Lives On”
Part of FREE INSIGHTS AT THE ATRIUM
March 28, 2017

The New York Philharmonic Leon Levy Digital Archives has released The Toscanini Era, 1925–1945, comprising 1,300 folders of documents totaling approximately 70,000 pages, 12 marked scores, and 200 related parts. This new material represents the fifth release in the multi-year initiative to digitize the Orchestra’s extensive archives funded by the Leon Levy Foundation. The release coincides with the 150th anniversary of the birth of former Philharmonic Music Director Arturo Toscanini, and falls during the New York Philharmonic’s 175th anniversary season. The New York Philharmonic Leon Levy Digital Archives are available at archives.nyphil.org.

Highlights of the documents in The Toscanini Era, 1925–1945, include:

- The score of Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony revealing a musical debate across time between Toscanini and Mahler. Responding to Mahler’s changes in the score, Toscanini wrote that they were “unworthy of such a musician.” An anonymous party later wrote in Latin, “nomina stultorum sunt ubique locorum,” which means “the names of fools appear everywhere.”
- Home movies filmed by Principal Trumpet Harry Glantz on the 1930 tour to Europe that established the Philharmonic as a major international ensemble. The 16mm black-and-white films include Toscanini and his family aboard ships and trains, and document the musicians touring Europe with their families.
- Business documents covering the 1928 merger of the New York Philharmonic and New York Symphony that formed today’s New York Philharmonic and the proposed merger with The Metropolitan Opera during the Great Depression.
- Selected newspaper clippings, logistical documents, and Toscanini’s Philharmonic contracts and tax returns.
Planning materials, scripts, and hand-colored glass lantern slides used to illustrate the programs for the long-running Young People’s Concerts, which began in 1925, and the notebooks children submitted about their experiences attending the concerts.

“The Toscanini Era is a particularly dynamic period of expansion and hardship for the Philharmonic,” said Philharmonic Archivist / Historian Barbara Haws. “It consolidates as the city’s major orchestra, emerges as an international force under Toscanini, creates Young People’s Concerts under the direction of Ernest Schelling, and deals with the effects of the Great Depression and World War II. It is also the time when new media and the coast-to-coast Sunday afternoon radio broadcasts make it ‘America’s Orchestra.’ This collection documents the uneasy transition from Willem Mengelberg, who had led the Philharmonic since 1922, to Toscanini, who was given the authority to decide which musicians would stay in the merged orchestra in 1928. It also documents the turmoil caused by Toscanini’s departure in 1936 with the ill-fated offer to Willem Furtwängler, followed by John Barbirolli’s short tenure, leading to the appointment of the fiery Artur Rodziński.”

In the previously announced Insights at the Atrium event “Toscanini at 150: The Maestro Lives On” — which is also part of the celebration of Toscanini’s 150th birthday — writer, music historian, and former Leonard Bernstein Scholar-in-Residence Harvey Sachs draws on materials from the New York Philharmonic Archives and Toscanini’s letters to survey the Philharmonic milestones that defined the Italian maestro at the height of his career. The event will take place Tuesday, March 28, 2017, 7:30 p.m. at the David Rubenstein Atrium at Lincoln Center (Broadway at 62nd Street).

The Toscanini Era, 1925–1945, is the fifth release of material in the multi-year initiative to digitize the Orchestra’s extensive archives funded by the Leon Levy Foundation. Previous releases have included The International Era, 1943–1970 — with its focus on Leonard Bernstein — and all existing Philharmonic printed programs, from the first concert in 1842 to the present.

The New York Philharmonic celebrates its 175th anniversary season with programs and activities that highlight its rich history of commissioning and premiering important works and that celebrate its hometown of New York City with The New World Initiative.

About the New York Philharmonic Leon Levy Digital Archives

The New York Philharmonic Leon Levy Digital Archives was launched in February 2011, and currently comprises more than two million pages, including 13,882 printed programs, marked conducting scores, business documents, and photographs. When completed, the online collection will contain every document in the New York Philharmonic Archives from 1842 through 1970, more than 3 million pages — including correspondence, marked scores and parts, contracts, and minutes from meetings of the Board of Directors — as well as all public documents from 1970 through today, including marketing materials, press releases, and annual reports.

Since its launch in February 2011, the New York Philharmonic Leon Levy Digital Archives has been visited more than 1.2 million times, with over 5.5 million pages viewed. Almost 40% of all visitors are repeat users, and 13% of all visits are by those who have returned between 10 and
200 times to the site, indicating the sustained research value of the Digital Archives. Over the last year alone, the number of pages viewed has grown by 25%, and the number of unique visitors has grown by 21%. This magnitude of research would not be possible without the digital availability of the material, as there would be no way to physically accommodate so many interested researchers.

Current material available in the Digital Archives includes:
- 1,767 scores marked by Leonard Bernstein, Andre Kostelanetz, and others
- 16,018 music parts marked by Philharmonic musicians
- 13,882 printed programs
- 4,344 business and planning folders
- 16,375 photographs and images

All documents and the photographs themselves have been photographed by Ardon Bar-Hama and his team using innovative and advanced techniques to achieve the highest quality. The images are managed in Alfresco Content Services, an open-source digital asset management system configured by a team of developers of Technology Services Group (TSG) in coordination with the Philharmonic’s Digital Archives team.

The New York Philharmonic Archives, the oldest and most comprehensive collection of any symphony orchestra, contains approximately six million pages that date back to its founding in 1842, with holdings that include correspondence, business records, orchestral scores and parts, photographs, concert programs, and newspaper clippings, as well as concert and broadcast recordings dating from the 1920s.

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The New York Philharmonic Leon Levy Digital Archives is funded by the Leon Levy Foundation.

The Leon Levy Digital Archives has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Exploring the human endeavor.

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Programs are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

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