

Historical Archives of the Vienna Philharmonic

With the foundation of the Vienna Philharmonic commenced also the documentation of its concert activity: Next to the original “founding decree” of Otto Nicolai (March 1842) and the programme leaflets of the Philharmonic concerts, around 70 documents are preserved even from the early years of the orchestra. Shortly after the introduction of Philharmonic subscription concerts in the year 1860, a sheet music archive was established, which until 2010 was continuously managed by an active member of the Vienna Philharmonic: The acquisition and retention of sheet music is settled already in the first internal regulations of the Vienna Philharmonic from September 1861.

Next to the maintenance and continued enlargement of the music library, the programme leaflets, posters, important documents, letters, honorary gifts, etc. were also stored in this “operational archive”. Its managers thereby (unknowingly) also ran a historical archive, even though such a one did officially not exist – the separation of the operational archives from the historical archives took place only with the resolution of the philharmonic general assembly from July 30, 1979. In May 1985, a separate room was established for the historical archives in the building of the Musical Society, and 15 years later it moved to the “House of Music,” in which is located also the Museum of the Vienna Philharmonic. It is in this building, the former palace of Archduke Carl, in which Otto Nicolai lived during the foundation of the orchestra.

An extensive collection of programmes and a concert database are at the heart of the historical archives, and nearly all objects and documents of the collection stand in direct relation to the Vienna Philharmonic. The stock covers:

- About 7.000 programmes / programme leaflets
- Posters
- About 6.500 letters (Berg, Bernstein, Brahms, Böhm, Bruckner, Busoni, Dessoff, Dvorák, Einem, Elgar, Furtwängler, Hindemith, Karajan, Kienzl, E. und C. Kleiber, Knappertsbusch, Korngold, C. Krauss, Krenek, Krips, Lehár, Mahler, Nicolai, Pfitzner, H. Richter, F. Schmidt, Schönberg, R. Strauss, J. Strauß, Weingartner, B. Walter, et al.)
- Honorary gifts (awards, prizes, golden/platinum/double-platinum records or discs, etc.)
- Memorabilia of composers and musicians or certain events (Brahms’ glasses, nib and cigarette case, a matchbox with Wagner’s picture from the belongings of Bruckner, Beethoven’s walking cane, Mahler’s travelling cap, the batons of various conductors, Bernstein’s dress coat, etc.)



WIENER
PHILHARMONIKER
— 1842 —

- Decrees and certificates
- Medals
- *Damenspenden* of the Philharmonic' balls since 1924
- About 15.000 pictures of the Vienna Philharmonic and its conductors (partially with dedications)
- Autograph manuscripts (Brahms, Richard Strauss, Pfitzner, et al.)
- First editions of scores and orchestra parts
- Membership registers, card indexes
- Files and documents (protocols of committee meetings and general assemblies, official documents, business papers, etc.)

The tone archives of the Vienna Philharmonic are located separately and not publicly accessible. For legal and technical reasons the production of copies is currently not possible.

Contact:

Dr. Silvia Kargl

Historisches Archiv der Wiener Philharmoniker

Haus der Musik

Seilerstätte 30

1010 Wien

Tel. +43-1-505 65 25/500

hist.archiv@wienerphilharmoniker.at

Appointments for visits for the purpose of academic research are possible by previous arrangement. The archives are closed in July and August.