Library acquires recordings from Onondaga Historical Association

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By Pamela Whiteley McLaughlin • (315) 443-9788

The Belfer Audio Archive of Syracuse University Library has accepted the donation of more than 700 78-rpm recordings from the Onondaga Historical Association (OHA). The recordings were formerly part of the collections of the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra. The OHA took ownership of them when the orchestra declared bankruptcy in 2011. The collection donated is comprised mainly of operatic excerpts and orchestral works.

Jenny Doctor, the recently appointed director of the Belfer, says of the gift, “Though not rare, the newly donated discs are in excellent condition and will undoubtedly enhance the Belfer Audio Archive’s collection of nearly 400,000 78-rpm recordings. This acquisition is a welcome addition to our classical collections, representing music that has been significant to the conductors and players of the Syracuse Symphony and its community since the 1940s.”

The Arthur and Diane Belfer Audio Laboratory and Archive, founded in 1963 and named in 1982, is among the largest collections of sound recordings in the United States, holding over half a million items in a variety of formats, from the earliest experimental recordings on tinfoil to modern digital media. The Belfer’s representation of classical music is substantive, but the archive has focused largely on popular vocal and instrumental music, including jazz, patriotic, novelty, folk, country, ethnic and experimental genres, as well as recordings of the spoken word. The late 19th and early 20th centuries are particularly well represented through a collection of more than 22,000 cylinders and extensive holdings of 78-rpm discs.

For more information, contact Doctor at 315-443-3477 or jrdoctor@syr.edu.

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