

The New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives

Moderated User Testing

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(New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives, n.d.)

Our Team



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Agenda

- Introduction: Project Scope & Goals
- Methodology
- Findings and Recommendations
- Conclusion + Next Steps
- Q&A + Discussion

A black and white photograph of a woman with curly hair, looking thoughtfully to the left. In the background, a historical letter is visible, featuring a circular postmark from Baltimore, Maryland, dated May 12. The letter is written in cursive and includes the name 'Mrs. Susan I. ...'. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the word 'Introduction' in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Introduction

(New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives, n.d.)

The Project - Scope

- The New York Philharmonic Digital Archives
 - Usability testing of their current Digital Archives
- Part of a larger NEH grant
 - Improve discoverability and accessibility of archival material

The Project - Goals

- Improve the exploratory experience for new users landing on the site
- Evaluate and improve the experience for experts/researchers seeking out specific archival information.



Methodology

(New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives, n.d.)

Moderated Remote User Testing - Process

- A form of lab experiment
- Users as participants
- Conducted in a controlled environment
- Actively moderated by an expert
- Participants complete tasks and think aloud

Moderated Remote User Testing - Benefits

- Only requires 5 participants
- Minimal Technology needed
 - Internet connection
 - Computer
 - Recording mechanism
- Can be done remotely
 - Wider Participant pool

Participants - User Groups

Three key groups:

- The Amateur
- The Explorer
- The Professor

Participants - Recruitment

- Created a survey to determine interest & eligibility
- Amazon gift card as an incentive
- Circulated internally and via the NY Philharmonic
- Reached out to participants to schedule tests

Testing - Tasks

Task 1:

Find a program and a photo that includes William Lincer, a member of the New York Philharmonic orchestra in the mid 1900s.

Task 2:

Find the sheet music and clarinet piece for Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Ballet.

Task 3:

Find the digital exhibition about its first female musician, and where said musician was born

Task 4:

Find the newly digitized set of press clipping scrapbooks, which are featured on their homepage, and specifically one from the park concert series

Task 5:

Find a recording of one of the virtual performances offered by the Philharmonic in the first few months of the pandemic, and which soloist performed the most during this time

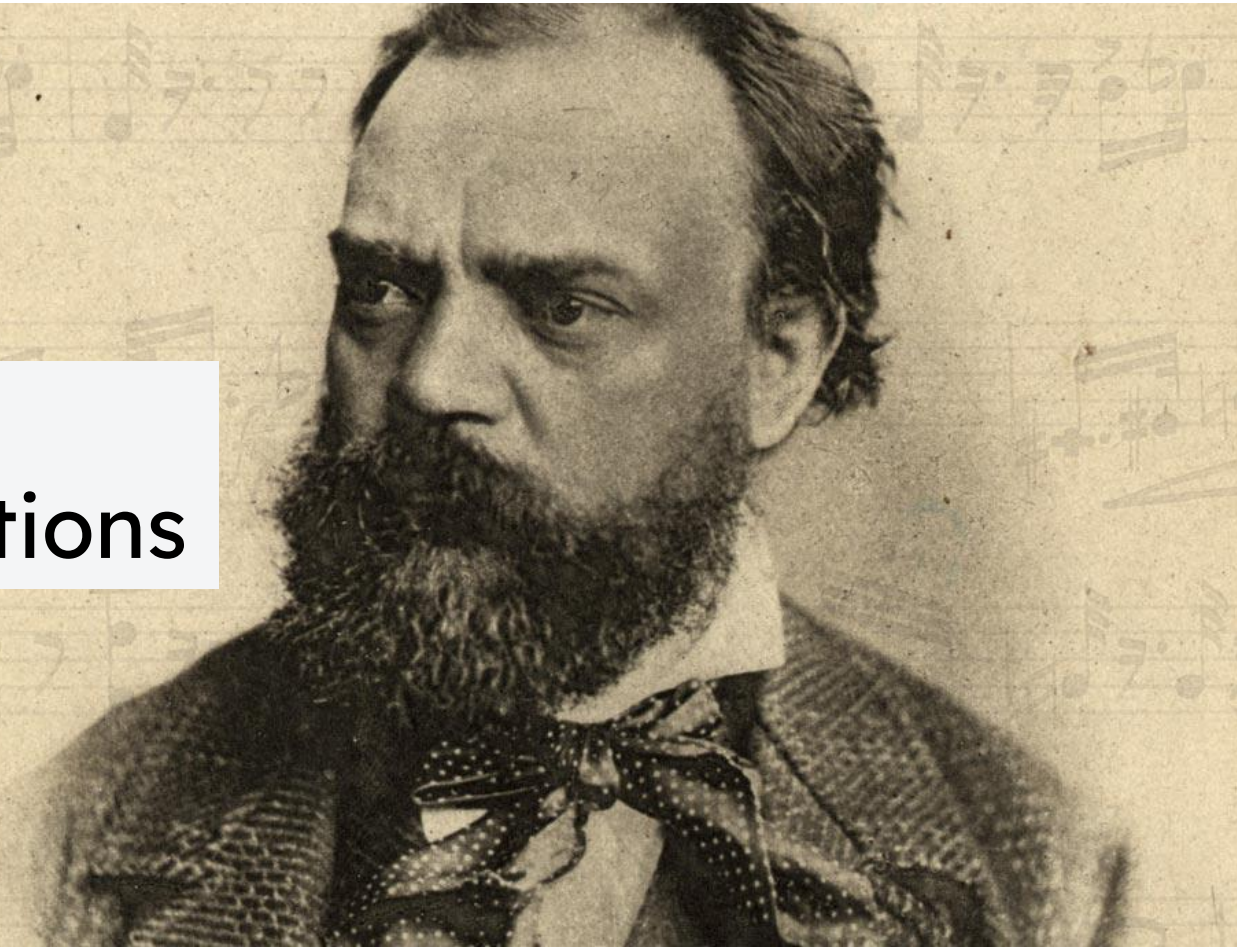
Testing - Post Test

- System Usability Scale
 - Quickly and easily assess usability
- Emotionally focussed questions
 - Gauge their experience with the Digital Archives

Testing - Review

- Reviewed footage
- Group discussion
- Rainbow chart
- SUS Analysis

Findings and Recommendations



(New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives, n.d.)

“It’s a very well designed interface. It does match the culture of the New York Philharmonic.”

“I definitely like that the first thing I see is the ‘Search the Digital Archives’ section.”

A word cloud of user feedback terms. The words are arranged in a roughly circular pattern, with 'well-designed' and 'efficient' being the largest. Other prominent words include 'attractive', 'scrolling', 'clear', 'simple', 'search', 'unexpected', 'basic', 'coherent', 'accessible', 'functional', 'detailed', 'interesting', 'consistent', 'contemporary', 'inefficient', and 'attractive'.

attractive scrolling
inconsistent
contemporary clear
simple search
unexpected basic
inefficient well-designed
coherent accessible
functional detailed
interesting
efficient

Word cloud generated from user responses to the post-test survey

1. I think that **I would like to use this system frequently.**
2. I found the system unnecessarily **complex.**
3. I thought the system was **easy** to use.
4. I think that I would **need the support of a technical person** to be able to use this system.
5. I found the various **functions** in this system were well integrated.
6. I thought there was too much **inconsistency** in this system.
7. I would imagine that most people would learn to use this system very **quickly.**
8. I found the system very **cumbersome** to use.
9. I felt very **confident** using the system.
10. I **needed to learn a lot** of things before I could get going with this system.

SUS Survey

Findings and Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Improve navigation usability and accessibility by updating styling, spacing, and text.

Recommendation 2: Update style and navigation elements on the carousel to make it more intuitive and accessible.

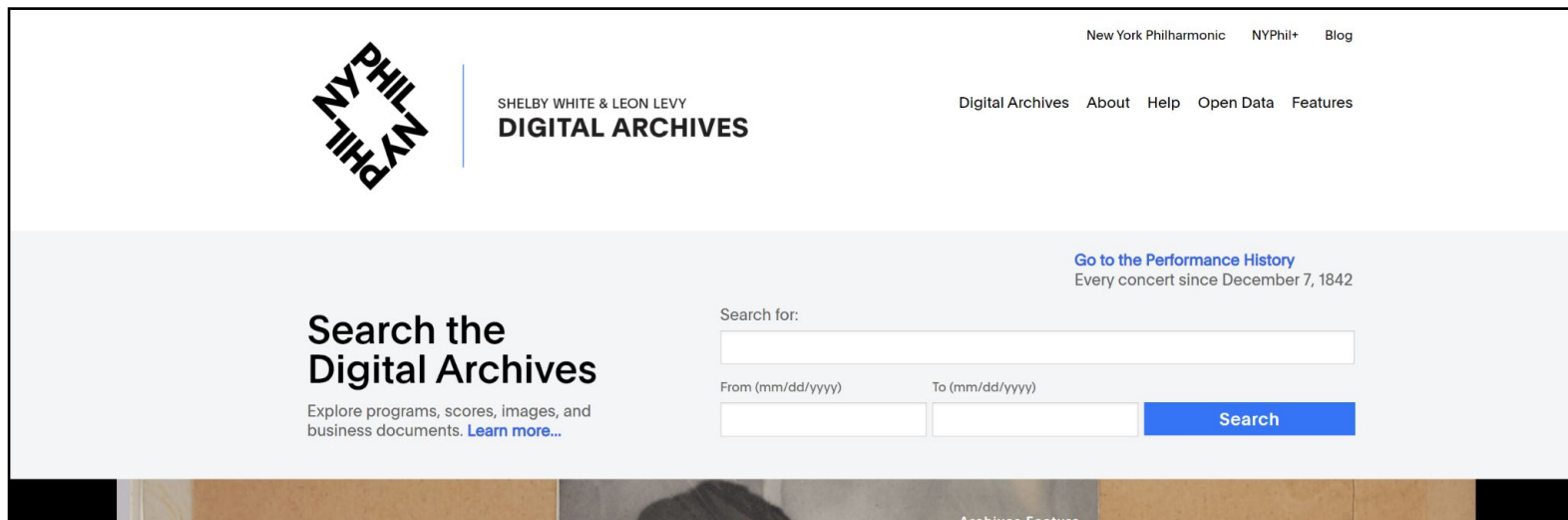
Recommendation 3: Streamline search results page with consolidated sort and filter options.

Recommendation 4: Move pop-up modal underneath each filter and introduce a search bar for the filter options when opened.

Recommendation 5: Minor findings and recommendations

Finding #1

Navigation usability and accessibility challenges



The screenshot displays the top section of the NY Phil Digital Archives website. On the left is the NY Phil logo, a diamond shape with 'NY PHIL' repeated. To its right is the text 'SHELBY WHITE & LEON LEVY DIGITAL ARCHIVES'. In the top right corner, there are links for 'New York Philharmonic', 'NYPhil+', and 'Blog'. Below these are links for 'Digital Archives', 'About', 'Help', 'Open Data', and 'Features'. A search section is located in the lower half, featuring the heading 'Search the Digital Archives' and a subtext 'Explore programs, scores, images, and business documents. [Learn more...](#)'. To the right of this is a search form with a 'Search for:' label, a large text input field, and two date input fields labeled 'From (mm/dd/yyyy)' and 'To (mm/dd/yyyy)'. A blue 'Search' button is positioned to the right of the date fields. A link 'Go to the Performance History' is also present, with the text 'Every concert since December 7, 1842' below it.

NY PHIL NY PHIL NY PHIL

SHELBY WHITE & LEON LEVY
DIGITAL ARCHIVES

New York Philharmonic NYPhil+ Blog

Digital Archives About Help Open Data Features

[Go to the Performance History](#)
Every concert since December 7, 1842

Search the Digital Archives
Explore programs, scores, images, and business documents. [Learn more...](#)

Search for:

From (mm/dd/yyyy) To (mm/dd/yyyy)

Recommendation 1

Improve navigation usability and accessibility by updating styling, spacing, and text.

Recommendation 1

1.1) Add link styling to the navigation labels to make it clear that they are interactive links (and that they signify the active page)

1.2) Change the “Features” label to “Exhibits”

The screenshot shows the top section of the NY Phil Digital Archives website. The header includes the NY Phil logo, the text 'SHELBY WHITE & LEON LEVY DIGITAL ARCHIVES', and navigation links: 'New York Philharmonic', 'NYPhil+', and 'Blog'. A navigation menu contains 'Digital Archives', 'About', 'Help', 'Open Data', and 'Exhibits'. A search section features a search bar, date range inputs ('From (mm/dd/yy)' and 'To (mm/dd/yy)'), and a 'Search' button. A link 'Go to the Performance History' is also present. Annotations 1.1 through 1.5 highlight specific elements: 1.1 points to the 'Digital Archives' link, 1.2 points to the 'Exhibits' link, 1.3 points to the 'Search the Digital Archives' heading, 1.4 points to the 'Search' button, and 1.5 points to the NY Phil logo.

1.5

1.1

1.2

1.3

1.4

NY PHIL
NY PHIL

SHELBY WHITE & LEON LEVY
DIGITAL ARCHIVES

New York Philharmonic NYPhil+ Blog

[Digital Archives](#) About Help Open Data [Exhibits](#)

Go to the Performance History
Every concert since December 7, 1842

Search for:

From (mm/dd/yy) To (mm/dd/yy)

Search

Search the Digital Archives

Explore programs, scores, images, and business documents from the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. [Learn more...](#)

Archives Feature

Recommendation 1

1.3) Add “...from the New York Philharmonic” to the explanatory text by the search bar

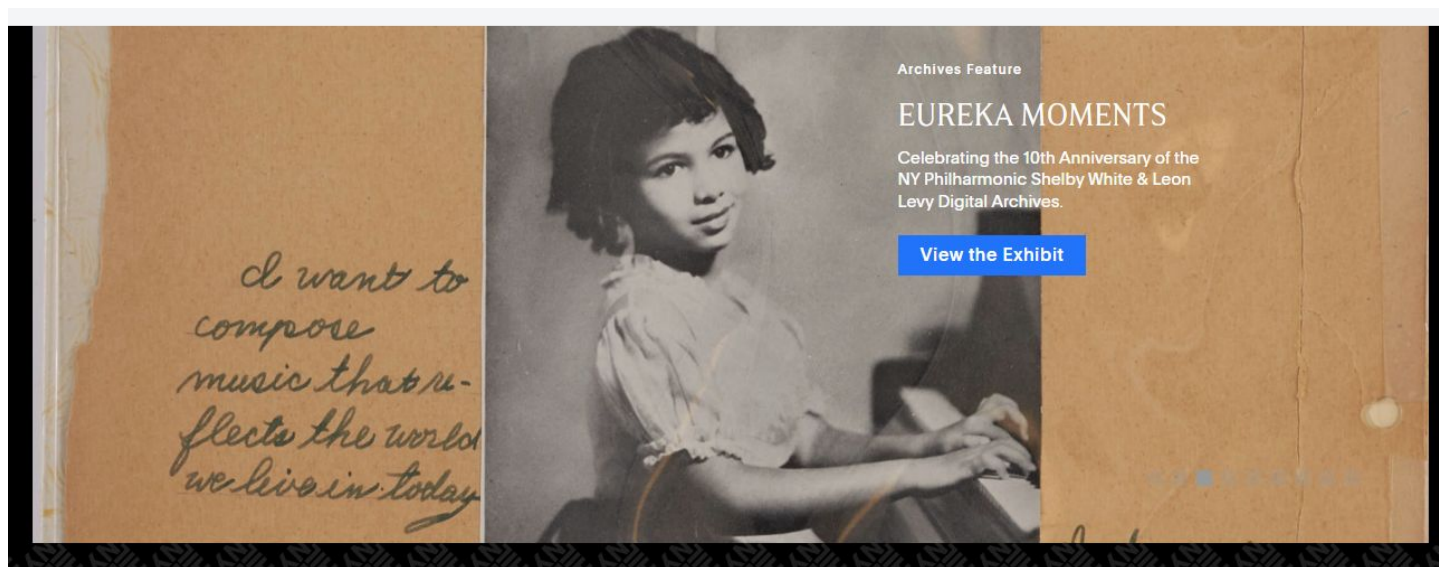
1.4) Shrink the top navigation slightly to reduce white space

1.5) Additional adjustments to improve accessibility of main navigation and search

The screenshot shows the top section of the NY Philharmonic Digital Archives website. The header includes the NY Philharmonic logo (1.5), the text 'SHELBY WHITE & LEON LEVY DIGITAL ARCHIVES', and navigation links: 'New York Philharmonic', 'NYPhil+', 'Blog', 'Digital Archives' (1.1), 'About', 'Help', 'Open Data', and 'Exhibits' (1.2). A hand cursor is shown over the 'Exhibits' link. Below the header is a search section with the heading 'Search the Digital Archives' (1.3) and the subtext 'Explore programs, scores, images, and business documents from the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. [Learn more...](#)'. The search area contains a 'Search for:' input field, 'From (mm/dd/yy)' and 'To (mm/dd/yy)' date range inputs, and a blue 'Search' button (1.4). A link 'Go to the Performance History' with the subtext 'Every concert since December 7, 1842' is also present. The footer of the search section says 'Archives Feature'.

Finding #2

Challenges navigating the carousel and with button contrast



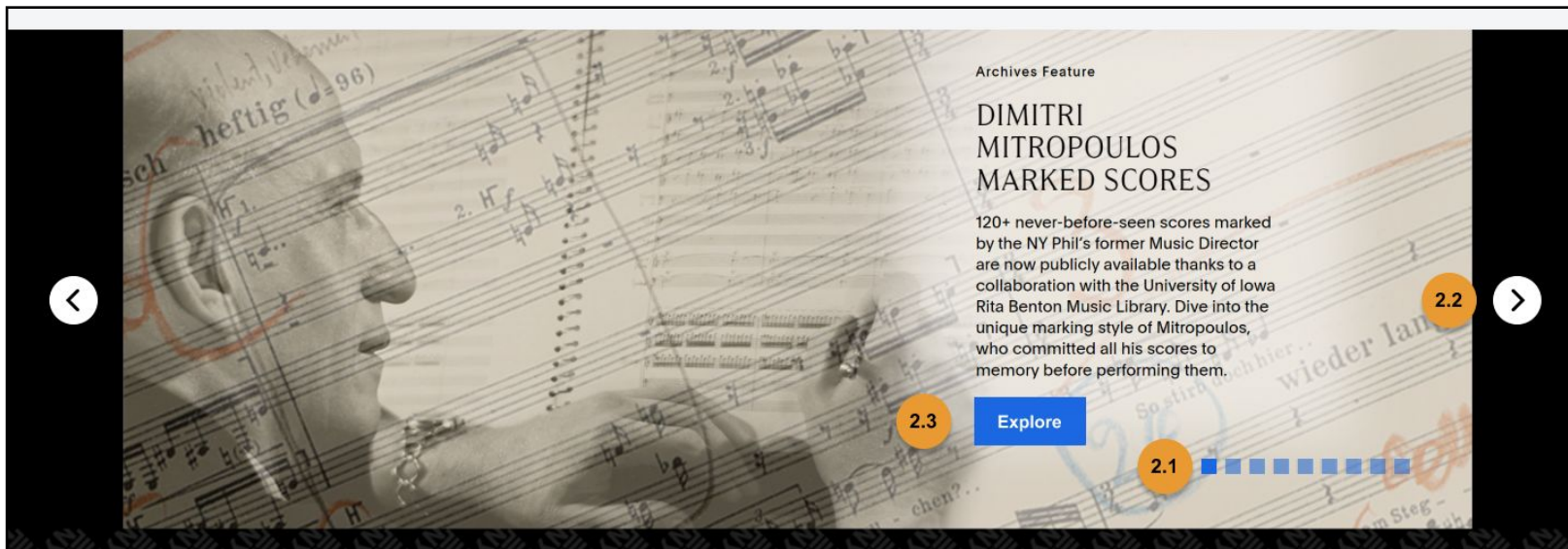
"It's luck to see what the page loads on the carousel and if it wouldn't have showed up [via the automatic timing that flips through carousel banners], I wouldn't have known that it was there."

Recommendation 2

Update style and navigation elements on the carousel to make it more intuitive and accessible.

Recommendation 2

- 2.1) Change the color of navigation buttons
- 2.2) Unhide the navigation arrows
- 2.3) Change the colour of the 'Explore' button



Finding #3

- Results page layout prevented users easily navigating and filtering search results
- Users obtained inconsistent content in search results

The screenshot shows a search results interface. At the top, there is a horizontal navigation bar with document type filters: **Programs** (0), Scores (0), Parts (0), Images (8), and Business Documents (1). A yellow circle with the number '1' is positioned to the left of the 'Programs' filter. Below the filters, on the right side, is a 'Sort by:' dropdown menu set to 'Dates', with 'AZ' and 'ZA' icons next to it. A yellow circle with the number '2' is positioned to the right of the sort options. On the left side, there is a 'SORT & FILTER' section with the heading 'Refine This Search by:' and a list of categories including 'Conductor' and 'Soloist'. The main content area displays 'No Results' and a message: 'Sorry, your search for 'william lincer photo' produced no results for the 'Programs' document type. Click on another document type tab to see if there are results for other types.'

Recommendation 3

Streamline search results page with consolidated sort and filter options.

3.1) Consolidate sorting and filtering options.

3.2) Display search results content intuitively for users by adding “All Results” and displaying results consistently.

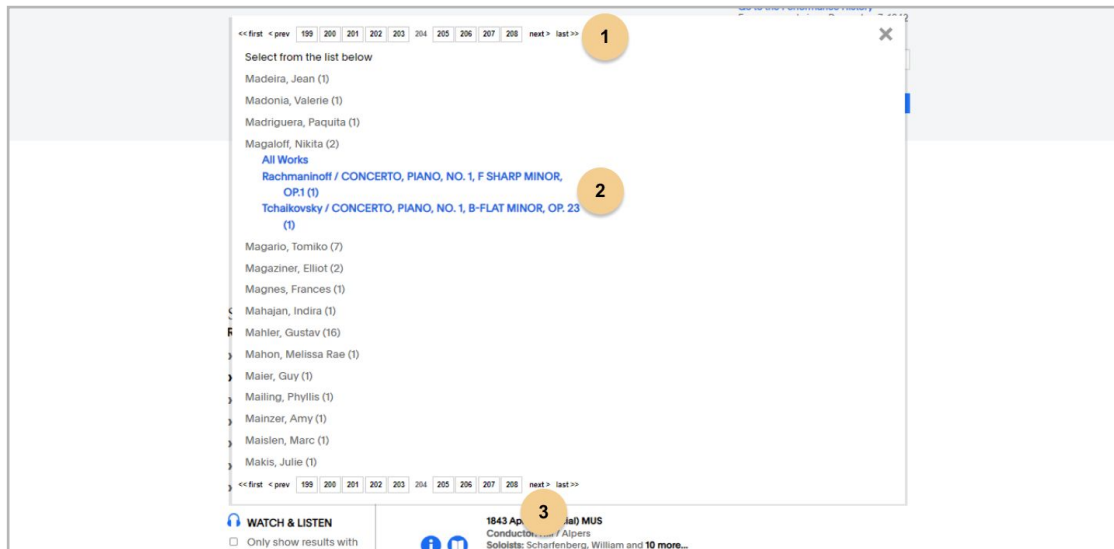
The screenshot shows a search results page for 'lincer, william'. On the left, a 'FILTER' section (annotated with 3.1) allows refining the search by Document Type (Programs, Scores, Parts, Images, Business Documents), Conductor, Soloist, Composer / Work, Location, Venue, Event Type, and Season. A 'WATCH & LISTEN' section offers an option to show only audio or video results. The main results area (annotated with 3.2) is titled 'All Results for lincer, william' and features a pagination bar (1-5) and a 'Sort by' dropdown menu (annotated with 3.1) currently set to 'Dates Ascending'. The results list includes:

- 1943 Nov 11 (Subscription Season) NYP
Conductor: Walter
Soloists: Schuster, Joseph and 1 more...
Location: Carnegie Hall, Manhattan, NY
- 1943 Nov 12 (Subscription Season) NYP
Conductor: Walter
Soloists: Schuster, Joseph and 1 more...
Location: Carnegie Hall, Manhattan, NY
- 1943 Nov 14 (Subscription Season) NYP
Conductor: Bernstein
Soloists: Schuster, Joseph and 1 more...
Location: Carnegie Hall, Manhattan, NY
- 1944 Feb 14 (Private Concert) NYP
Conductor: Rodzinski
Soloists: Corigliano, John, Sr. and 11 more...
Location: Hotel Plaza, Manhattan, NY
- 1944 Oct 25 (Special) MEM

Finding #4

Issues with:

1. Navigating pages of filter options
2. Dropdown options for soloists, conductors, and composers/works
3. Overlay of pop-up modal



“There must be a better way to find an individual with this very long list”

“I don’t like skimming through all the pages, I find it very annoying.”

Recommendation 4

Move the pop-up modal underneath each filter, introduce a search bar for the filter options, and remove the additional layer of filtration options

4.1) Move the pop-up modal underneath the filter options

4.2) Introduce a search bar under the filter options

4.3) Remove the additional layer of filtration options

The screenshot shows a web interface for a music program. At the top, there are navigation tabs: **Programs** (47), Scores (0), Parts (1), Images (85), and Business Documents (24). A 'Sort by: Dates' dropdown is visible on the right.

The main content area is titled 'Results for lincer, william' and displays a list of performance events. Each event includes a date, season type, conductor, soloists, and location. For example, '1943 Nov 11 (Subscription Season) NYP' with conductor Walter Schuster.

Annotations are placed on the interface:

- 4.1**: Points to the 'SORT & FILTER' section, which includes 'Refine This Search by:' with expandable options for Conductor, Soloist, and Composer / Work.
- 4.2**: Points to a search bar and a 'Search' button located below the filter options.
- 4.3**: Points to a list of names (Anderson, Barber, Bartok, Biloti, Block, Brahms, DuPage, Fuleihan, Guenther, Handel, Hill, Jacobi) that is currently hidden behind the search bar.

At the bottom of the filter section, there are additional options for Location, Venue, Event Type, and Season, along with a 'WATCH & LISTEN' section and a checkbox for 'Only show results with'.

Recommendation 5

Minor findings and recommendations

Recommendation 5

Minor findings and recommendations

Topics:

- Accessibility
- Metadata
- User Interface
- Links and Labels
- Knowledge Organization

Lincoln Center A Challenge To Architects

Lincoln Center is a great architectural opportunity and challenge. Whether, or ever, has there been a group of buildings built at one time and in one place to serve as homes for a nation's leading artistic organizations in the fields of music, dance and drama and as a center for public enjoyment, study and appreciation of these arts. Never before has such a group of buildings been possible in New York City in a setting of park and plaza spaces, unobscured by the rigid vertical lines of skyscrapers.

To recognize this opportunity with the Lincoln Center and Institute of the Lincoln Center and its Committee, composed of Mrs. W. Drey, Jr., Arthur Hays Sulzberger, Jr., C. D. Jackson, S. S. Spector, and Rockefeller Int. Chairmen, architectural, engineering, construction, and other groups, are all beautiful, being the noble program of Lincoln Center.

...of student productions in all of the various arts forms, for the opera, ballet, the technical personnel, and the office for the management and for auxiliary groups such as the Guild and the National Council for the Performing Arts.

Philharmonic Hall has been designed to meet the requirements of the opera, ballet, and other arts. There is a need to plan for more such needs as a place for a dance to assemble and wait the entrance on the stage; a music library; a "green room" for the conductor, and offices for the management, etc. must be provided.

Such facilities as these are provided in the opera house, nevertheless.

Philharmonic to Give Free Park Concerts



Series in Traveling Shell and Stage to Be Classical

By THEODORE KRONENBERG

The New York Philharmonic will give three weeks of free park concerts in city parks next August. Mayor Wagner announced recently at City Hall that the city would spend \$125,000 for physical planning of parks, stage and seating, and the Philharmonic will give the first concert in the park.

POPULAR SYMPHONY MUSIC FOR MASSES, MAHLER'S PLAN

New Philharmonic Leader Would Give Concerts to Educate Public.

By ALAN DOWNER

The president of the Fair was in... (Continued On Page 18)

SURPRISE AT THE WORLD'S FAIR

Mayor La Guardia Shows His Talent as a Conductor in Rehearsal And Performance With Philharmonic-Symphony

By ALAN DOWNER

The president of the Fair was in... (Continued On Page 18)

Art Section, Sunday, June 22, 1958

FORWARD-6-22571182

CONSTELLATION: STADIUM CONCERTS

German Director Here Tells of Scope of Season's Program

By ALAN DOWNER

LOWERED PRICES OF AD

German Director Here Tells of Scope of Season's Program

THE NEW YORK SUN, MONDAY, MARCH 23, 1931.

International and Domestic Field

Street Notes Won Her Harp Make Her a Queen

Female Among 115 males, Steffy Goldner responds to the Baton of the Great Toscanini.

By JULIE DANZIGER

ONE of the greatest orchestras of the present day assembled, Carnegie Hall listened to the red-tinted breath, and off on the right side of the stage with deft fingers plucking the strings of her beautifully proportioned gold harp. Steffy Goldner, the only woman member of the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra. This is her ninth season, and she still holds undiminished the honor of being the only woman ever to be under contract with this illustrious group of musicians.

This becomes more significant when one realizes that the harp is one of the most difficult instruments of the orchestra to play. There are forty-seven strings which must be continually tuned and seven pedals, each of which has three positions to be manipulated. To play this instrument requires the utmost concentration, a keen ear for harmonics and absolute pitch. Many of the composers, not having a thorough understanding of the harp, wrote parts for it which are extremely difficult-in fact, well high impossible to play. That for a woman to have achieved such success at a harp is no mean feat.

Miss Goldner has toured all over the world, a queen among the 115 male members. When they finish their sleeping cars she is put in the master car to sleep with the harp. She will be here.

She is treated with

Not as Easy as It Looks



In order to release the golden harmonies which lie hidden in its symphonic instruments the harpist must keep forty-seven strings continuously in tune and manipulate five pedals. The photo shows

Conclusion and Next Steps

Philharmonic Hall Tested With a Bang

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1937

Music: Boulez Leads Choral Program

By ALAN DOWNER

The new Philharmonic Hall was tested with a bang on Friday night when the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, under the baton of the young conductor, Pierre Boulez, gave its first concert in the new hall. The program was a most interesting one, and the hall was filled to capacity.

AT CARNEGIE HALL Philharmonic Back—Bravo!

By ALAN DOWNER

The Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra returned to Carnegie Hall on Friday night for its first concert in the new hall. The program was a most interesting one, and the hall was filled to capacity.



Leonard Bernstein will conduct the Stadium Symphony Orchestra tomorrow night in the opening concert of the 1958 season at Lincoln Stadium. At right, Alexander Soudousski will mark the harp's debut as feature conductor. Teller, right, will also conduct Wednesday and Thursday.

Philharmonic's 2000th Concert

Society Repeats Beethoven and Kalliwoda Works Given in First Program in 1842.

By W. J. HENDERSON

The Philharmonic Society gave its 2,000th concert yesterday afternoon in Carnegie Hall. In honor of this reaching the end of the second "grand" Mr. Mengelberg repeated two of the works performed at the first concert of the organization, given in the Apollo Rooms, December 7, 1842.

Special Effects

These three songs are a lot of fun. They have Beethoven's characteristic exuberance. Beethoven, really, full of emotion, they are most attractive writings. The second, the third of the Concerto program was a most interesting one, and the hall was filled to capacity.



Miss Goldner has toured all over the world, a queen among the 115 male members. When they finish their sleeping cars she is put in the master car to sleep with the harp. She will be here.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Tracking Effectiveness of Improvements:

- Run additional SUS surveys
- Facilitate additional moderated user testing

Topics for further investigation:

- Accessibility audit
- A/B testing of components and labels
- Card sorting and/or tree testing of the sitemap

Thank you!

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