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125th Anniversary of Carnegie Hall With Release -GREAT MOMENTS AT CARNEGIE HALL-

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USPA NEWS - Ever since its opening night in May 1891, Carnegie Hall has held sway as the undisputed shrine of classical music in America. It was and remains the essential venue for all great artists. To celebrate Carnegie Hall's 125th anniversary, Sony Classical in partnership with Carnegie Hall is proud to...

Ever since its opening night in May 1891, Carnegie Hall has held sway as the undisputed shrine of classical music in America. It was and remains the essential venue for all great artists. To celebrate Carnegie Hall's 125th anniversary, Sony Classical in partnership with Carnegie Hall is proud to present an extraordinary new 43-CD box set of treasures from the RCA and Columbia archives featuring live recordings from many of the world's greatest musicians.

Available April 29, this unique deluxe edition contains a complete previously unreleased piano recital by Sviatoslav Richter and is accompanied by a 104-page coffee table book, which includes notes by Director of Carnegie Hall's Archives Gino Francesconi as well as many facsimile documents and photographs. This recorded chronicle of eight decades spotlights many of the artists who enjoyed historically close ties to Carnegie Hall.

It begins with two performances of Beethoven's Fifth, from 1931 and 1933 by Arturo Toscanini and continues with a performance from 1934 in which Serge Koussevitzky conducts Roy Harris's First Symphony, among the first works by an American-born composer to be recorded by a major orchestra. It was one of some 115 important compositions “” by Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Bartók and others “” that Koussevitzky and the BSO gave their US premieres at Carnegie Hall.

But it is really the soloists, especially the great pianists, who have played the principal role in establishing the hall's unique reputation. A landmark in its history took place and was recorded in 1943. Vladimir Horowitz joined his father-in-law Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra in an all-Tchaikovsky program to help raise money for the war effort. Their sensational performance of the Piano Concerto No. 1 has been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.

In 1958, a 23-year-old Texan pianist named Van Cliburn astonished the world by beating out eight Soviet pianists to win the first International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. After he had played Rachmaninoff's Third Concerto, conducted by the illustrious Kirill Kondrashin, the audience leapt to its feet and gave the pianist an eight-minute standing ovation. A few weeks later, Cliburn, again partnering with Kondrashin, recaptured the sensation he made in Russia with this Carnegie Hall performance of 'Rach 3'.

The first US tour by Sviatoslav Richter in 1960 culminated at Carnegie Hall in the towering, previously unreleased all-Beethoven recital contained here. From 1961, Sony has included excerpts of two Chopin evenings given by another keyboard icon, Arthur Rubinstein, 55 years after his Western-hemisphere debut at this same hall. Another famous, if not infamous, evening occurred in 1962, when Glenn Gould's 'unorthodox' interpretation of the Brahms D minor Concerto was disavowed by conductor Leonard Bernstein before their performance with the New York Philharmonic. (Bernstein's witty prefatory remarks to the audience are heard here along with the concerto).

Another highlight in Carnegie history was Horowitz's legendary return to the hall in 1965. Other great recitals in the new set include the U.S. debut recital of Canadian pianist Ronald Turini from 1961, those given by Jorge Bolet in 1974, Rudolf Serkin's from 1977, Lazar Berman's from 1979, Evgeny Kissin's US recital debut from 1990 and Arcadi Volodos's Gramophone award-winning recital from 1998. There's also a wonderful 1972 organ recital by the charismatic Virgil Fox (including his charming spoken introductions to each piece) as well as a major violin-piano recital, Midori's Carnegie solo debut from 1990.

Carnegie Hall has also been a mecca for famous singers ever since Adelina Patti, one of the most celebrated sopranos of the 19th century, made her debut there in 1893. The year 1955, in which Kirsten Flagstad and Beniamino Gigli both mounted their US farewells at Carnegie, also featured a return recital by the great Swedish tenor Jussi Björling. When he came out on stage for the recital, Björling

was given a welcome described as being of "football stadium proportions." Always a New York favorite, Björling's Carnegie recital from 1958 is included here as well.

Leontyne Price, who made her Carnegie debut with the Boston Symphony in 1954, singing music by her close associate Samuel Barber, gave her solo recital debut in 1965, included here. The beloved American soprano, who appeared more than 40 times at Carnegie Hall, is also heard in a recital from 1991. Other great American vocal artists in the Sony Classical compilation include Shirley Verrett in a recital from 1965, Jennie Tourel accompanied by Leonard Bernstein in 1969, Kathleen Battle and Frederica von Stade in a 1991 Christmas concert conducted by André Previn, as well as Marilyn Horne's 60th-birthday celebration from 1994,...

Another birthday celebration graces this set: the 85th of Carnegie Hall in May of 1976. Hailed as the 'Concert of the Century', this truly once-in-a-century event brought together a clutch of the most iconic names in classical music: Mstislav Rostropovich, Vladimir Horowitz, Leonard Bernstein, Yehudi Menuhin, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and, not least, Isaac Stern, who 16 years earlier had mounted a successful campaign to save the hallowed hall from demolition.

Together with the New York Philharmonic “” which had presented the world premiere of DvoÅ™Ã¡k's 'New World' Symphony at an early Carnegie Hall appearance in 1893 “” and the Oratorio Society of New York, the organization for which the hall was principally conceived and which was heard at all but one of the opening week concerts in 1891, these great artists paid a fitting tribute to New York's classical music shrine.

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