Narrative Section of a Successful Application

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the NEH Office of Challenge Programs application guidelines at https://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/infrastructure-and-capacity-building-challenge-grants for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Office of Challenge Programs staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

Project Title: Preservation and Digitization of the New York Public Radio Archives

Institution: New York Public Radio

Project Director: Andy Lanset

Grant Program: Infrastructure and Capacity Building Challenge Grants

New York Public Radio
Preservation and Digitization of the New York Public Radio Archives
Prepared for the National Endowment for the Humanities
3. Narrative – May 2019

New York Public Radio
Preservation and Digitization of the New York Public Radio Archives
NEH Grant—Narrative
May 2019

OVERVIEW OF REQUEST

WNYC and WQXR are two of New York City's oldest and most thriving media properties. Together, under the umbrella of New York Public Radio (NYPR), they have captured the sounds of New York City for nearly a century. As WNYC approaches its centennial in 2024 and WQXR enters its 83rd year, the NYPR Archives—**which steward a dynamic and continually expanding audio collection of tremendous importance to public and scholarly understanding of New York City's history, society and culture**—are at a crossroads. Many of the Archives' historic sound recordings are on obsolete and deteriorating media formats. With the future of these collections at risk, the NYPR Archives must respond to this urgent need and safeguard its invaluable historic and cultural collections in two key ways: 1. Complete the digitization and preservation of the NYPR Archives' physical assets; and 2. Upgrade and transform its digital infrastructure with the purchase, introduction, and implementation of a state-of the-art Digital Asset Management System (DAM), a more robust and secure system for access, storage, and retrieval. NYPR is grateful to the NEH for past support and for recognizing the importance of digital infrastructure in the preservation of archival collections, as well as the importance of digitizing the collections themselves as this meets the unique needs of a legacy media broadcast organization. Additionally, a challenge grant from the NEH will help NYPR expand its fundraising capacity by helping leverage project support from new and existing donors.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The NYPR Archive—**the largest non-commercial radio collection of sound archives outside of the federal government**—are a powerful tool to inform public understanding of how the world we live in, the American experience, was shaped by providing the context, texture and nuance that only archival audio can convey. **Together, WNYC and WQXR have captured the voices, rhythms, music, and rituals of New York City since 1924**. They provide a link to WNYC and WQXR's storied pasts,

increasing public understanding of American life and culture through what was, for decades, the dominant electronic media of the day. From the quotidian to the historic, the NYPR Archives hold tens of thousands of recorded hours of broadcasts, interviews, and performances. This programming is a vital, living record of American political, social, and cultural history and includes explorations of literature, music, urban history and policy over the course of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. Its preservation will provide access to irreplaceable historical and cultural humanities assets for future generations.

In addition to serving as a resource for the ongoing media production of WNYC and WQXR, the NYPR Archives regularly respond to reference inquiries from filmmakers, podcasters, radio producers, documentarians, scholars, researchers, museums, students and teachers. Examples of recent requests include: ***Radio Diaries*** for a rare recording of the German American Bund rally at Madison Square Garden from 1939; **Ken Burns' film company** for WNYC reporting just after the April 1989 attack of a jogger in Central Park; **HBO** for WNYC audio from September 11, 2001; **the American Library Association** for permission to reprint *On the Media's* "Breaking News Consumer: Fake News Edition" in their special report "Fake News and Alternative Facts: Information Literacy in Post-Truth Era," by author Nicole A. Cook; and the **BBC** for a 1972 WNYC recording of Shirley Chisholm declaring her candidacy for president. Furthermore, **many academics have drawn on the NYPR Archives as an important resource,** including Cornell University, the City University of New York, and Barnard College. The Archives also provide important material for scholarly publications. A sample includes:

- *Eleanor Roosevelt, Volume 3: The War Years and After, 1939-1962* by Blanche Wiesen Cook
- *Stan Lee: Conversations*, Edited by Jeff McLaughlin
- *New Italian Migrations to the United States: Vol. 2: Art and Culture since 1945,* Edited by Laura E. Ruberto and Joseph Sciorra
- *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening* by Jennifer Lynn Stoever
- *Across the Waves: How the United States and France Shaped the International Age of Radio* by Derek Vaillant

In terms of future use, there are, no doubt, yet-to-be-developed media platforms for which NYPR Archives content will be used. Twenty years ago, when the web was in its infancy and social media did

not exist, the demand for audio was already increasing. We anticipate that there are web-related programs in development, including distance learning and research platforms, that will require archival audio.

To better serve the public and expand access to the humanities, we must move ahead in two ways:

1. **Complete the digitization of the NYPR Archives physical assets in honor of the WNYC centennial in 2024**

The NYPR Archives represent a century of the evolution of sound recording itself—with historic content that is in danger of becoming irretrievably lost. WNYC's vault shelves contain audio in multiple obsolete formats (analog and digital), from vertically cut shellac discs to mini-discs. These formats are all degrading at different rates—depending on composition and age—but all are in danger of becoming unsalvageable as even their playback equipment is archaic. It is imperative that NYPR complete the digitization of these assets—at-risk materials and one-of-a-kind recordings/masters. Quite simply, if we don't, we will lose access to the comprehensive audio history of New York City over the last hundred years.

Since its founding in 2000, and thanks to the generous support of the NEH and other funders, the NYPR Archives has preserved and made over 5,000 broadcasts publicly accessible online, produced web articles and series from these broadcasts, and repatriated thousands of hours of WNYC & WQXR broadcasts from other collections for producer use and public access. **And yet, there remain thousands of hours of audio in the WNYC and WQXR archival collections that have yet to be digitized**. Completing the digitization of the majority of NYPR assets in honor of WNYC's centennial is an enormous undertaking that will require both internal and external resources, requiring outside vendors to assist in the process. It will enable producers, researchers, and the public with immediate needs to efficiently access archive assets as they won't have to wait for back-coated polyester tape to be baked or lacquer discs to be cleaned and transferred. Additionally, archives staff will be able to focus their attention on pushing preserved audio and its associated metadata to the web so it can be referenced more readily. To date, NYPR has digitized approximately one-third of its archive, which leaves **more than 40,000 vulnerable assets, the majority from 1937-2007, in need of conversion**. Generally, priority is given to high-value, at-risk materials of national, cultural, political, social or historical interest.

Priority humanities collections for digitization include:

- **WNYC Municipal Archives from 1938-1970**: The WNYC Collection at the New York City Municipal Public Archives, a unit of the Department of Records, is one of a handful of taxpayer-supported audio archives collections available to journalists and other media professionals. **WNYC's more than nine decades of service have left NYPR with access to the largest non-commercial collection of sound archives outside the federal government**: there is no larger collection from such a broad period on disc and tape from one public radio station. The WNYC Collection is composed of some 13,000 acetate or lacquer transcription discs and approximately 10,000 tapes of audio documenting the mid-20th century American experience. While selections from this collection have been digitized, the abundance of remaining material features some of the most influential figures of 20th-century law, politics, culture, and more, including Robert F. Kennedy, Constance Baker Motley, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Adlai Stevenson, Bertrand Russell, Jackie Robinson, Licia Albanese, and countless others. Studying these recordings will help students and scholars alike uncover new insights and provide a deeper historic understanding of issues that the city and the nation continue to face today.

- **WNYC Newsroom from 1985 to 2000**: WNYC is a critical source for local news in New York City—and has been for 95 years. WNYC was the first U.S. station to broadcast news of the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. From 9/11 to Hurricane Sandy, it is still the station New Yorkers turn to both for daily political and civic coverage and in times of crisis. This collection contains individual reporters' stories as well as live feeds from newsworthy press conferences and events from national political conventions to City Hall. Many of these were recorded on location. These unique audio records tell the story of city budgets, policy and cultural issues, addressing the breadth of local and national events in New York City at the time. As such, they provide important historical context on current events. This collection includes 1,600 reels and 2,000 mini-discs of field recordings.

- **WNYC Cultural Conversations from 1985-2000**, *New York & Company* featured conversations with some of the late 20th century's most influential and provocative thinkers, writers and artists,

recorded on 1,700 tapes. This program includes a historically relevant catalog of interviews ranging

from art to literature to politics to philosophy, and illuminate complex issues that continue to

resonate today: race relations; immigration; climate change; economics; and trade and globalism.

The collection is brimming with interviews with cultural and artistic icons including June Jordan,

Horton Foote, Norman Mailer, Maria Callas, Elia Kazan, Grace Paley, Toni Morrison, and Amos

Oz. Historians, including Arthur Schlesinger, Howard Zinn, and Robert Caro, are also represented.

- **WQXR**: On air since 1936, WQXR has a wealth of programming to be digitized – over 1,000

  hours, the majority on cassette and reel-to-reel. Select programs, which shed light on the practice

  and performance of classical music in America include:

  - *The Vocal Scene with George Jellinek*: WQXR's music director from 1968 to 1984, Jellinek

    hosted a show featuring vocal music for 36 years (1969-2003). He presented recordings by famous

    artists, but also introduced singers who were less well-known to New York audiences, reaching

    beyond strictly opera to showcase Lieder, operetta, zarzuela, and more.

  - *The Listening Room*: Hosted by WQXR Host Robert Sherman, *Listening Room* aired live every

    weekday from 1970-1993 and was a destination for provocative conversations in music fused with

    appropriate recordings or in-studio performances. Notable guests included: Paul Robeson, Leontyne

    Price, Placido Domingo, Itzhak Perlman, Luciano Pavarotti, Alice Tully, and Aaron Copland.

2. **Upgrade and transform the NYPR Archives digital infrastructure with the introduction and implementation of a Digital Asset Management System (DAM)**

While NYPR preserves our historic collections, we also must safeguard the preservation of present

and future content. In tandem with the preservation of its material collections, the NYPR Archives need a

state-of-the-art digital infrastructure system that will seamlessly integrate information, storage, and

distribution systems, replacing NYPR's current archive catalog (CAVAFY). The purchase and

implementation of a state-of-the-art Digital Asset Management System (DAM) will provide a streamlined

system nexus, efficiently tying existing data and software systems together. With a DAM, NYPR's

DAVID broadcast delivery, Pro Tools editing, and immediate Isilon storage and LTO disaster recovery

systems will work in concert, dramatically improving the capacity and quality of NYPR's digital

infrastructure, and providing easier and ongoing access to basic archive and catalog information internally, which will expedite materials for public access through wnyc.org and participating portals like the American Archive of Public Broadcasting (AAPB) and the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). Key challenges the Archives faces without a DAM include:

- **Outdated and inefficient software management tools**, operating beyond their optimal capacities, stressing the system and at risk of crashing, increasing potential for asset loss.

- **Systems that do not adequately communicate with each other**, necessitating continual patches and intricate and inefficient workaround scripts that tax all aspects of the system.

- **Lack of an asset storage system** with hierarchical cloud storage that provides prioritized and cost-effective on-line, near-line and off-line asset access.

- **Inability to regularly monitor assets**, especially video, as these are physical and subject to deterioration

The installation and implementation of a Digital Asset Management System (DAM) will address these challenges and will be the foundation for improved internal and public access to the archives.

In terms of capacity, the DAM will:

- **Integrate internal data catalogs and software systems** to preserve and provide access to NYPR's assets and future-proof them for the inevitable advances in technology.

- **Automatically embed** in the asset files vital descriptive, technical, copyright, licensing and contract information so that assets with expired terms cannot be used.

- **Improve ADA compliance for NYPR websites** with artificial intelligence/speech to text capacity.

- **Streamline the metadata and file exports** for sharing assets and asset information with organizations including the Library of Congress, New York Public Library, AAPB, and more.

- **Provide cataloging and long-term storage tools and retrieval options** we do not currently have for video, photographs, and other physical documents.

- **Improve control over high-resolution materials in multiple cloud locations** enabling frequently requested materials to be on- or near-line accessible, while seldom-pulled materials could be placed

off-line yet retrievable to comply with the archival best practices and disaster recovery protocols needed for a collection with such a broad scope, ensuring the long-term preservation of our assets.

In terms of use, the DAM will:

- **Improve access to the material in the NYPR collections for internal and public use**, e.g. copyright, provenance info, audio format, and descriptive catalog information (metadata).

- **Standardize production workflow for NYPR content producers**—assets will be preserved at an expected technical specification, protected and saved as per established best practices.

- **Implement a uniform taxonomy** across all producer platforms to improve producer and listener/reader searches for specific content.

- **Introduce key-word-tagging and speech-to-text capability**, which will cut content production time as producers will no longer need to log or transcribe tapes.

- **Increase staff productivity** with built-in speech-to-text functionality, allowing any audio in the system to have text generated via Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The installation, implementation, and maintenance of a DAM will require **a new full-time staff person** to implement and oversee the transition to the new system, including setting up workflows, acclimating NYPR producers, coordinating the phased migration of all older assets and catalogs into the system and new, born-digital content. They will provide the necessary day-to-day system management.

AUDIENCE

The digitization and preservation of the NYPR Archives will benefit and serve the general public including, media producers, the public radio audience, political and cultural historians, scholars, researchers, educators, and students by providing them with a window into the political and cultural history that NYPR is uniquely able to share. NYPR programming will share selections from a century of preserved audio—our collective inheritance—with the broadest possible audience. WNYC and WQXR reach 4 million people in the New York metro region and a total of 24 million monthly via national programs and digital channels. Once materials are digitized, they will be available for reporters and producers to incorporate into news stories, public affairs and cultural shows, and other special programs.

The WNYC Newsroom, *On The Media*, and *The Brian Lehrer Show* are just a few of the WNYC programs that use archival recordings regularly, and WNYC's daily arts and culture show, *All of It,* showcases archival material with a regular segment featuring NYPR archivist Andy Lanset, "Andy in the Archives." WQXR also routinely uses archival material in its programming. Most recently, archival sound was used in two special longform programs on Harry Belafonte and Leonard Bernstein.

In addition to media-curated selections, scholars, students, and the public will be able to explore all recordings freely at wnyc.org and wqxr.org. as well as by special request. **In calendar year 2018, the Archives received 670 requests for assistance and material from outside and inside the organization** (students, researchers, listeners, filmmakers, and podcast, radio and web producers). This included calls for archive audio, photographs, video and other asset content in addition to reference assistance. The Archives receives 9,000 downloads per year (see Attachment 14: Appendix A—Current Use: Top 50 Archive Downloads of 2018) and the Archives' newsletter has 1,500 subscribers. Additional audiences can access the Archives via partner organizations such as the Library of Congress and the New York Public Library, which have holdings from NYPR's previous NEH grants.

LONG RANGE INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING

New York Public Radio's mission is to make the mind more curious, the heart more open, and the spirit more joyful through excellent audio programming that is deeply rooted in New York. The preservation and digitization of the New York Public Radio Archives is deeply aligned with the organization's mission and key to providing audio programming of the highest caliber. The installation and implementation of a Digital Asset Management System (DAM) will provide the state-of-the-art technology necessary to preserve both historic, current and future programming. Additionally, the preservation and digitization of physical assets in obsolete, at-risk formats will help fulfill NYPR's public service mission by providing improved and expanded scholarly, internal, and public access to the archives. This is imperative as NYPR approaches its centennial in 2024. NYPR's executive, board, and development leadership are in the process of incorporating this work into its long-range planning. The challenge grant will contribute to our developing strategy for WNYC's nascent 100th Anniversary Campaign and serve as a cornerstone to jumpstart campaign planning and leverage additional funds.

NYPR has proven it has the resources to sustain its humanities activities with the employment of three current full-time staff in the archives. We anticipate hiring one additional staff member to oversee the transition, implementation and management of the DAM, which we will sustain over the long-term. NYPR's executive team is fully behind the project. Please see the attached letter of support from Interim CEO, Depelsha McGruder (Attachment 9).

IMPACT AND EVALUATION

Challenge grant funds from the NEH will strengthen and enhance NYPR's programming and ability to provide its audience with a richer portfolio of audio. The proposed project will impact: media producers, historians, researchers, students, and the public who will have access to a broad library of unique historical and cultural audio artifacts. The preservation of a century of assets will trigger a more robust outreach effort via our marketing department. Additionally, we will evaluate the project quantitatively and qualitatively.

Quantitatively, we will evaluate project impact by tracking: (i.) Total number of items digitized and catalogued; (ii.) Estimated broadcast audience of programs that use archival materials (e.g. "Andy in the Archives" segments) (iii.) Increase in downloads via the Archive website; (iv.) Increase in requests for assistance and material from outside and inside the organization e.g. students, researchers, listeners, media producers; and (v.) Increase in subscribers to the Archives newsletter.

Qualitatively, we will evaluate project impact by: (i.) Use of archival material in stories of record—becoming, for instance, a point of reference on a particular issue; (ii.) scholarly citations of NYPR archivists/archives (iii.) Notable industry awards for work containing archival material; and (iv.) Strength of partnerships with other institutions such as the Library of Congress, the Museum of the City of NY.

FUNDRAISING PLAN

The total NEH budget for the digitization and preservation of the NYPR Archives is $3,813,173. NYPR requests a grant of $750,000 from the NEH, which would require raising matching challenge grant funds of $3,000,000. In addition to leveraging interest from a short-term endowment, a challenge grant from the NEH would be an opportunity and an advantage in kicking off the planning and quiet phase for WNYC's Centennial Campaign. The event of a challenge grant would help us reach out to new and

existing foundations, government funding entities, and individual listeners, as well as Board members and their networks. Our plan for raising the grant funds is:

- NYPR has a proposal under consideration with the Leon Levy Foundation for restricted support for the NYPR Archives with a grant of $1,500,000 to $2,500,000. This would help us fulfill the requirements of the challenge grant, leaving a balance of $500,000 - $1,500,000 to be raised.

- NYPR is exploring potential funding with the following foundations: Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Tow Foundation, CLIR, GRAMMY Foundation, and the New York State Program for the Conservation and Preservation of Library Research Materials, among others.

- NYPR is exploring an Archives-focused donor drive with individual listeners and major donors. Our 250K+ members are deeply committed to our mission and history of service.

- A challenge grant would also provide a strong opportunity ask the NYPR Board of Trustees to participate in an Archives-focused fundraising effort as part of the nascent Centennial Campaign.

TIMELINE (Please see Attachment 10 for detail.)

Year 1: Hire DAM Manager; Purchase DAM: Begin asset migration: Prep for digitization and preservation

Year 2: Continue DAM integration and asset migration; Ongoing asset prep; Digitization and preservation

Year 3: Maintain DAM; Continue asset migration; Ongoing asset prep; Digitization and preservation

Year 4: Maintain DAM; Ongoing asset prep; Digitization and preservation

Year 5: Maintain DAM; Ongoing asset prep; Digitization and preservation

CONCLUSION

As NYPR approaches its centennial in 2024, we must transform our technology infrastructure to become an archive for the 21st century—preserved, accessible, and useful—in turn enabling NYPR to digitize and incorporate the remainder of our at-risk physical sonic assets in grave danger of being lost. Past NEH support has made a tremendous impact in the growth and capacity of the Archives. A challenge grant from the NEH would help NYPR provide an invaluable repository of humanities programming documenting American civic and cultural history for the use of current and future generations. We thank you for your consideration of our request.