

The World's Only Global Musical Instrument Museum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MIM Presents Musical Treasures Spanning 9,000 Years of Chinese History in New Exhibition

Discover a spectacular collection of ancient instruments and works of art

PHOENIX (Oct. 3, 2017) – Beginning November 10, the [Musical Instrument Museum \(MIM\)](#) will showcase extraordinary musical and archaeological treasures spanning nine thousand years of Chinese music and history with its one-of-a-kind exhibition [Ancient Musical Treasures from Central China: Harmony of the Ancients from the Henan Museum](#).

Presented exclusively at MIM and in partnership with the Henan Museum, one of China's oldest and most prestigious museums, the exhibition explores the harmony between music, people, heaven, and earth through more than sixty extremely rare instruments and works of art on display for the first time in the United States.

"Harmony—in both the musical and the philosophical sense—has always been important in China, and this exhibition plays upon the concept to tie these priceless treasures together and bring history and music to life," says Colin Pearson, MIM's curator for this special exhibition and for Asia.

Ancient flutes and drums harken back to the dawn of Chinese civilization, giving us a glimpse of the musical life of an early agrarian society. Grand racks of bronze bells evoke elaborate rituals performed during the formative years of Chinese culture. Lively ceramic figures illustrate the joyful mixing of cultures during the time of the legendary Silk Road. Elegant silk strings entertain gatherings of refined music lovers and inspire poetic contemplation.

In addition to a collection of exquisite musical instruments, the exhibition also features beautiful artworks made of materials such as ceramic and jade. Many of these instruments and artworks were excavated from ancient tombs of Chinese nobility. Highlights of the exhibition include:

- **Bone flute, 7000–5000 BCE (approximately 7,000–9,000 years ago)** – This flute comes from a collection of several flutes that were excavated from the Peiligang burial sites and are collectively the oldest musical instruments in China. Crafted from the hollow wing bones of crane birds, these flutes are precisely tuned to a five-note (pentatonic) scale, indicating a highly developed music system.
- **Bianzhong bell-chime, Spring and Autumn period, 770–476 BCE (approximately 2,500–2,800 years ago)** – This set of twenty-four bells from the court of a duke of Zheng state illustrates the extravagance of noble families and is one of only ten surviving sets made in the latter half of the Zhou dynasty to play a flashy new style of music developed known as *zhengsheng*. Each bell—four *bo* bass bells and twenty *niu*—was specially crafted to produce two distinct musical tones.
- **Bronze "divine beast" drum stand, Spring and Autumn period, 770–476 BCE (approximately 2,500–2,800 years ago)** – Full-bodied depictions of mythical beasts are exceptionally rare, and this drum stand example is one of the finest uncovered to date. Malachite has been inlaid into the bronze body in phoenix and dragon patterns, and many of the beast's features are actually made up of small dragons and its face is framed by two persimmon flowers.
- **Tricolor glazed pillow depicting scholarly *qin* performance, Northern Song dynasty, 960–1127** – The multicolored decoration on this ceramic pillow illustrates two Confucian scholars in a manicured garden; one playing the *qin* while the other listens. The ability to play and appreciate the *qin* and its repertoire

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was described as one of the most important virtues that should be possessed by Confucian scholars, and its performance was meant to be shared privately among friends.

- **Musician and dancer figurines in a pavilion, Han dynasty, 202 BCE–220 CE (approximately 1,800 – 2,200 years ago)** – This unusual three-story tower houses an ensemble of musicians and dancers for the nobleman's entertainment, as well as a complement of guards armed with crossbows. Many Han tombs included ceramic models of the palatial homes that deceased noblemen wished to inhabit in the afterlife.
- **Red ceramic drum, Yangshao culture, 5000–3000 BCE (approximately 5,000–7,000 years ago)** – Ceramic drums like this are one of the most characteristic instruments used by the Neolithic Yangshao people. The drum would have had a membrane made from animal skin stretched across the large opening and held tight by the hooks around the rim.

Using interactive technology to explore the exhibition, guests will see, hear, and feel the harmony of the ancients. Video content will be available to watch performances on replicas of the instruments on display.

Ancient Musical Treasures from Central China: Harmony of the Ancients from the Henan Museum will be on display from November 10, 2017, through May 6, 2018. Information about supplemental programming will be announced in the coming months.

Admission

\$10 for special exhibition only

\$7 when purchased with general museum admission

Presenting sponsor: The Kemper and Ethel Marley Foundation

The Musical Instrument Museum is located at 4725 E. Mayo Boulevard in Phoenix (corner of Tatum and Mayo Boulevards, just south of Loop 101). For general museum information and a full schedule of events, visit **MIM.org** or call 480.478.6000.

About MIM

The Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) enriches our world by collecting, preserving, and making accessible an astonishing variety of musical instruments and performance videos from every country in the world. MIM offers guests a welcoming and fun experience, incomparable interactive technology, dynamic programming, and exceptional musical performances. MIM fosters appreciation of the world's diverse cultures by showing how we innovate, adapt, and learn from each other to create music—the language of the soul. To learn more about MIM, visit **MIM.org**.

Find MIM on Facebook: **Facebook.com/MIMphx**; Twitter and Instagram: **@MIMphx**, **#TreasuresatMIM**

About the Henan Museum

Founded in 1927, the Henan Museum is one of China's oldest and most prestigious history and art museums. Located in the city of Zhengzhou, at the heart of China's fertile and historic Central Plains, the museum features important antiquities from every recorded period of Chinese history. A wealth of archaeological sites in Henan

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Province—from Neolithic settlements to cosmopolitan imperial capitals—have borne thousands of artifacts from China's illustrious past. The museum's collection is renowned throughout China and recognized internationally for its richness and depth.

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