

The World's Only Global Musical Instrument Museum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Discover the Power of Music Across 6,000 Years of History in MIM's New Exhibition

Lasting legacies of global traditions, instrument development, and craftsmanship

PHOENIX (October 4, 2021) – Opening on November 12, the [Musical Instrument Museum's](#) (MIM) newest special exhibition, [Treasures: Legendary Musical Instruments](#), brings instruments with extraordinary pasts together to share the story of music like never before.

Presenting 80 exceptional instruments, including some of the finest in MIM's collection, alongside 20 objects on loan from renowned museums, private collections, and musicians across the world, the exhibition explores global performance traditions and musical instrument developments. History's most notable musical moments are portrayed through instruments such as a shell trumpet from the Maya civilization, an Amati violin that preceded the works of legendary luthier Antonio Stradivari, and the oldest guitar still in existence. Jimi Hendrix's left-handed Black Widow guitar will also join the exhibition. Used at the height of his fame during recording sessions in late October 1968, the instrument represents one of the exhibition's iconic stories of contemporary music.

Treasures reflects MIM's sustained acquisitions and partnership-building efforts with world-class museums for the past ten years. Partner institutions such as the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Penn Museum in Philadelphia, and Museu de la Música de Barcelona share loans remarkable in beauty, craftsmanship, and cultural significance.

From a trumpet possibly used during the ancient Olympic Games to a piano that debuted alongside the Eiffel Tower, musical narratives that forever changed the world unfold throughout the exhibition. Ornate gold details, intricately carved patterns, and iridescent inlay represent the skills of talented makers and artists from around the globe, while the legacies of influential musicians and the traditions of worldwide cultures are captured through video interviews with curators.

Original video production throughout the exhibition showcases notable artists, such as ukulele virtuoso Jake Shimabukuro, guitarist Jiji Kim, and mandolinist David Grisman, performing with some of the historic instruments on display. These videos offer guests an up-close view of great musicians sharing their passion about the importance of music and musical instruments.

"Music unites us and is something that all people have in common. At MIM we like to say that music is the language of the soul. The *Treasures* exhibition celebrates the role of music in human culture by presenting deeply compelling musical narratives through spectacular instruments," says MIM chief curator Manuel Jordán, PhD. "By exhibiting objects from MIM's collection alongside objects on loan from other museums around the globe, we are inviting guests to experience humanity's enduring creativity and inventiveness expressed through music."

Highlights of the exhibition include:

- **1889 Erard grand piano** – When it debuted at the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris alongside the Eiffel Tower, this piano was awarded the "Grand Prix" honors for its exquisite design. *Gift of the Robert J. Ulrich and Diane Sillik Fund*

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- **Violin and Viola, c. 1559** – Made by master Cremonese luthier Andrea Amati, these instruments were likely part of a set created for the marriage of King Philip II of Spain and Elisabeth of Valois. *Loan courtesy of National Music Museum*
- **Baroque guitar, c. 1590** – As the oldest full-size example of a guitar, this is one of the most historically significant instruments in existence. *Gift of the Robert J. Ulrich and Diane Sillik Fund*
- **Greco-Roman salpinx (trumpet), 3rd c. BCE–2nd c. CE** – Believed to be the only surviving ancient Greek trumpet, it was likely played at ceremonial occasions or possibly to announce athletic events—perhaps even for playing at the early Olympic Games. *Loan courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*
- **Lyre from Ur head and plate, c. 2550–2450 BCE** – These ancient lyre fragments from the cradle of civilization are part of the famous lyres of Ur, the world's oldest stringed instruments. *Loan courtesy of University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology*

The special exhibition's opening will be celebrated with a three-day [Signature Event](#) at MIM on November 12, 13, and 14 and will include family-friendly activities such as curator talks in the Target Gallery, live performances, and instrument demonstrations.

Treasures: Legendary Musical Instruments will be on display beginning November 12, 2021. For information about opening weekend and other supplemental programming, visit [MIM.org](#).

Admission

\$10 for special exhibition only

\$7 when purchased with general museum admission

\$4 for children/teens (ages 4–19)

Free for children (ages 3 and under)

Presenting sponsor U.S. Bank

Sponsored by John & Joan D'Addario Foundation and John & Mary Ann Mangels

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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](#).

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