

The World's Only Global Musical Instrument Museum

The Musical Instrument Museum Global Collection

PHOENIX – The Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) is a 200,000-square-foot building with two floors of spacious, light-filled galleries and a collection of more than 12,500 instruments and associated objects. Currently, more than 7,000 objects are on display from over 200 countries and territories. Built at a cost of \$250 million, MIM creates an exciting musical experience for guests, immersing them in traditions from around the world. The museum's galleries feature advanced wireless technology and high-resolution video screens, enabling guests to see instruments, hear their sounds, and observe them being played in their original settings—performances that are often as spectacular as the instruments. Select exhibits offer an insider's view of how instruments work, the workshop displays detail the instrument-building process, and the Experience Gallery offers musical instruments that guests can touch and play.

Music is something all humans share, a source of beauty and comfort, a means to give voice to joy in times of celebration, and a powerful force that brings people together. The museum's distinctive global collection comprises instruments, artifacts, costumes, and audio and video recordings. MIM's curatorial staff has traveled extensively to collect objects that convey the diversity of global musical practices. Each instrument was selected for its fine construction, the reputation of its maker, its special provenance, or its connection to a famous performer.

“The goal of the Musical Instrument Museum is to illuminate what is unique about cultures, and also what is shared and universal,” stated Bob Ulrich, MIM founder and board chair. “MIM provides an experience like none other, allowing musical novices and experts, tourists and scholars, children and grandparents to hear, see, and feel the powerful and uniting force of music in an entirely new way.”

The Collection

MIM's collection was assembled by a team of expert curators with the consultation of distinguished ethnomusicologists, organologists, and other field experts. The collection is highlighted in Geographic Galleries that focus on five global regions as well as in a special Artist Gallery that showcases noteworthy instruments played by many of the world's leading musicians.

MIM's **Africa and Middle East** collection has musical instruments from sub-Saharan, North African, and Middle Eastern nations. Guests can discover hunters' music from Mali, xylophone traditions of Ghana and Burkina Faso, ritual drums of Nigeria and Benin, an ivory trumpet played in a women's secret association in Sierra Leone, and a myriad of instruments presented thematically in the Democratic Republic of the Congo section. Middle East displays feature many variations of the lute-like oud and diverse traditions employing harps, zithers, flutes, and trumpets from the entire region.

The **Asia and Oceania** collection displays instruments from 50 countries and island groups in five sub-galleries devoted to the regions of East Asia; South Asia; Southeast Asia; Oceania; and Central Asia and the Caucasus. Elegant silk strings, brilliant bronze gongs, fanciful bamboo mouth organs, and elaborate lutes are featured throughout the gallery. Instruments played expressly to appease deities and spirits are highlighted alongside those designed to please earthly ears and eyes. Highlights include seven displays illustrating the musical traditions of China, a rich collection from India, ancient bronze drums from Vietnam, a full gamelan orchestra

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from Indonesia, and a re-creation of a Javanese gong workshop. The Oceania collection showcases iconic instruments and traditions from the Pacific region, including monumental slit drums from Vanuatu, Australian didgeridus, sacred Polynesian nose flutes, and the internationally beloved ukulele.

Showcasing instruments from some 40 countries and city-states, the **Europe Gallery** introduces guests to several stories of interconnection, innovation, and discovery—from centuries-old cathedral bells and antique Spanish guitars to a miniscule harmonica and royal grand piano. Some of these stories are familiar, others less well known; all reflect distinctive heritage and cultural achievements. Zithers, lutes, drums, horns, flutes, and fiddles of all shapes, sizes, and materials fill the gallery, demonstrating that people in Europe, just as others across the globe, have created an astounding variety of instruments to amplify human emotion.

The **Latin America** collection showcases instruments and ensembles from some 40 countries and territories displayed in the gallery's three sections: South America; Central America and Mexico; and the Caribbean. The gallery testifies to the remarkable retention of early European, indigenous, and African musical roots, while also portraying a region that is young, innovative, and responsive to global changes in the last century. MIM guests can explore variations across types of small and large guitars, harps, flutes, and drums found in several countries as well as unique creations developed by individual social groups. Highlights range from ancient Andean bone flutes and panpipes to Afro-Caribbean ceremonial drums and Amazonian shamanic rattles. The gallery also features families of stringed instruments, such as *charangos*, *cuatros*, and *bandurrias*; modern inventions like Trinidad's steel pans; and over two dozen personal instruments of celebrated regional and national artists.

In contrast to exhibits in the other Geographic Galleries, many of those in the **United States / Canada Gallery** are organized by themes such as musical genres or instrument types. Ranging from hip-hop to the Sousa Band, more than 70 displays in the United States / Canada Gallery explore traditional and popular sounds from the Arctic to the Mexican border. Guests can experience the diverse array of instruments that shaped the North American musical experience, including the Appalachian dulcimer, accordion, drum set, and electric guitar. The music of native peoples in the United States and Canada is highlighted in displays exploring old and modern musical traditions, with instruments such as the water drum, Native American flute, and Apache fiddle. Special exhibits present iconic American musical-instrument manufacturers such as C. F. Martin & Co. (guitars) and Steinway & Sons (pianos).

MIM's **Artist Gallery** features musical instruments linked to world-renowned musicians and music innovators as well as video footage of concerts, photographs, costumes, and other special items. Highlights include:

- instruments and artifacts belonging to Elvis Presley, including the Martin D-28 guitar he used for his last concert performance in June 1977
- two of Carlos Santana's custom guitars and one of his father's violins
- George Benson's Gibson Johnny Smith model guitar and one of the many Grammy Awards he won
- flutes played by Grammy-nominated Native American artist R. Carlos Nakai
- Doug "Cosmo" Clifford's iconic Camco drum set, played with Creedence Clearwater Revival on classic albums and live at Woodstock
- one of the enormous drums played at the opening ceremony of the 2008 Beijing Olympics
- theremin virtuosa Clara Rockmore's personal instrument, given to her directly by its inventor Léon Theremin

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To advise the museum on curatorial matters at the start, MIM assembled a Curatorial Council composed of representatives from some of the most important institutions with musical instrument collections in the world. Council members included Cynthia Adams Hoover, curator emerita, Division of Musical Instruments, Smithsonian Institution; J. Kenneth Moore, Frederick P. Rose Curator in Charge, Department of Musical Instruments, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Darcy Kuronen, curator of musical instruments, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Gary Sturm, chairman emeritus, Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History, Division of Music, Sports and Entertainment; Patricia Grazzini, deputy director and chief operating officer, Minneapolis Institute of Art; Eric De Visscher, former director, Musée de la musique, Paris; and Margaret Downie Banks, associate director and senior curator of musical instruments, National Music Museum, University of South Dakota.

Building Highlights

The 200,000-square-foot Musical Instrument Museum has two floors of galleries, the MIM Music Theater, Café Allegro, and the Museum Store. Designed by award-winning architect Rich Varda and the Minneapolis- and Phoenix-based firm RSP Architects, MIM features a distinctive architecture that evokes the topography of the Southwest, suggests the museum's international scope, and expresses the universal role of music across all cultures.

The façade of the museum is made of richly grained Indian sandstone that complements and blends with the surrounding desert colors. As guests approach the building entrance, they pass through a courtyard landscape designed by the leading firm Ten Eyck Landscape Architects of Phoenix and Austin. Desert plantings and arroyo environments surround the museum, creating a serene and welcoming oasis. The courtyard is further enhanced by a rotating bronze sculpture of blended instrumental forms, titled Phoenix, by Belgian artist Louis Halleux as well as a series of simple pools of water that add a calm appeal to the space, similar to the small pools of water found in an Arizona canyon.

The two-story museum structure includes 80,000 square feet of gallery space, with a 450-foot-long flowing river-like corridor called "El Río" that forms the spine of the museum, links the central atrium to the interior galleries, and offers changing views of the space. The wall finishes in Venetian plaster create patterns that evoke geological striations of the Arizona cliffs and canyons and allude to the rhythms of musical composition. The flooring is an Italian porcelain tile laid in a striated pattern; the ceilings feature light coves accented with linear light fixtures that move down El Río. Diffused daylight illuminates the galleries and public spaces through a ribbon of windows and skylights, while subtle lighting at night sets off and animates the building, in an abstract pattern much like piano keys.

In addition to Guest Service (the admission desk), the Museum Store, the Artist Gallery, and the Conservation Lab, the first floor of MIM also houses the Orientation Gallery, which introduces guests to the rich diversity of forms, materials, and usage of instruments around the globe. The Target Gallery hosts special temporary exhibitions such as the MIM-curated *Beyond the Beat: Drums of the World* and *Stradivarius: Origins and Legacy of the Greatest Violin Maker*, as well as touring shows such as *American Sabor: Latinos in U.S. Popular Music* developed by the Experience Music Project in Seattle and *Women Who Rock: Vision, Passion, Power* created by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum in Cleveland.

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The first floor also includes the Mechanical Music Gallery, with instruments from as early as the late eighteenth century. A highlight is the 27-foot-wide orchestrion built in Belgium in 1926 by Theofiel Mortier, S.A., and remanufactured by the Decap brothers in 1950. Along with the 680 wooden and metal organ pipes, the instrument also incorporates two accordions, two saxophones, a xylophone, a drum set, and other percussion instruments that play mechanically. Next door is the Experience Gallery, a hands-on space where guests can play an array of instruments that are on display throughout the museum, including drums, tuned percussion instruments, mbiras (thumb pianos), theremins, banjos, and guitars. This gallery is adjacent to event spaces that can be rented out for special workshops, meetings, programs, youth parties, and other activities.

A dynamic spiral staircase, with a unique floor mosaic map of the world at its base created with multicolored stones from around the globe and topped with an oculus skylight, draws guests upstairs. The second floor is devoted to MIM's extensive core collections arranged in five Geographic Galleries, which boast of soft maple-wood flooring and cherrywood doorway portals, hinting at the transition between geographical regions as guests pass through the various galleries.

Spanning the two floors of the museum is the 300-seat MIM Music Theater. Designed with spacious seating and state-of-the-art acoustics, the intimate hall is a premier venue for performances, films, and seminars about musical traditions from around the world. Upon entering the performance theater, low stone walls and a stone-colored maple-wood stage greet guests, again evoking the rocks of the Arizona canyons. Reflecting MIM's mission to focus on the diversity of cultures and global musical practices, inaugural season performers hailed from Colombia, Sierra Leone, China, Brazil, Israel and the United States, and the MIM Music Theater now hosts more than 290 world-class concerts per year.

MIM Guest Information

Address 4725 East Mayo Boulevard
Phoenix, AZ 85050
Tel. 480.478.6000

Admission General Admission: \$20
Teens (ages 13–19): \$15
Children (ages 4–12): \$10
Children 3 and under: Free

Hours Open daily, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

To learn more about MIM, visit **MIM.org**. Find MIM on Facebook: [Facebook.com/MIMphx](https://www.facebook.com/MIMphx); Twitter and Instagram: **@MIMphx**

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