Rediscover Cuba at the Musical Instrument Museum

One of the largest and most diverse assemblage of Cuban instruments in the U.S.

PHOENIX (March 24, 2016) --- As part of its five-year anniversary celebration, the Musical Instrument Museum (MIM) will expand its Cuban instrument display, making the collection one of the largest and most diverse assemblage of Cuban instruments and artifacts in the nation.

Cuban music is often considered one of the world’s richest and most influential, and MIM’s new display, composed of instruments from the museum’s permanent collection, recognizes its importance not only to its global visitors but also to Phoenix’s growing Latin community. Cuban music has contributed to the development of a wide variety of genres, most notably in Latin America, the Caribbean, and parts of Africa.

Since the early 20th century, especially with the introduction of recording technology, Cuban music has been hugely popular and of crucial influence to the history of Latin music. The Cuba display at MIM will showcase culturally significant instruments representing a wide spectrum of genres and musical contexts, including danzón, bolero, rumba, conga de comparsa (music from Santiago’s Carnival), son, cha-cha-cha, mambo, timba, Afro-Cuban jazz, and sacred traditions (Santería, Iyesá, Abakuá, and Arará).

This collection of musical instruments is made possible through the ongoing work and partnerships with the Cuban Ministry of Culture, particularly the Instituto Cubano de la Música (ICM) and the Museo Nacional de la Música, and individually, with numerous artists and their estates. “The enormous challenge to curate this collection and overcome obstacles to bring it from Cuba to the United States was well worth taking,” said Dr. Daniel Piper, MIM’s curator for Latin America. “Cuba has given the world a profound musical legacy, only the surface of which is visible to the public today.” Piper continued, “It was truly an honor for MIM to go directly to the source so we could present more of this rich story at the museum.”

Over half of the display contains personal contributions of leading and historically significant Cuban traditional and popular artists and groups such as Orquesta Aragón, Irakere, and Cachao y Su Combo. Four-time Grammy Award® winner Arturo O’Farrill, best known for his contributions to contemporary Latin jazz (more specifically Afro-Cuban jazz), explained the significance of this Cuban exhibit, “MIM’s interest in Cuban music and the collection they have obtained is very inspiring to me personally as they have garnered instruments from some of my heroes, including Los Papines and Los Muñequitos de Matanzas. In addition, MIM has treated the Yoruban religious nature of our music with respect and I’m impressed with the care they’ve taken to understand the nature of Cuban music in all its expressions, from charanga to Afro-Cuban Jazz, from Mambo to modern.”

On display beginning March 24, the instruments will be complemented with the exquisite beadwork of Afro-Cuban artist Felipe García Villamil, rich graphics and photography, two video monitors running rare performance clips, and interpretive texts.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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.

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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.

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Media Contact
Carlotta Soares, Media Relations Consultant, MIM
Carlotta.Soares@MIM.org
480.245.6937