

The World's Only Global Musical Instrument Museum

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Instruments Played by the Heroes of Folk, Blues, and Bluegrass Music Coming to MIM

A once-in-a-lifetime gathering of iconic instruments that explores the living history of American acoustic music

PHOENIX (September 25, 2023) — Opening on November 10, [Acoustic America: Iconic Guitars, Mandolins, and Banjos](#), the newest special exhibition at the [Musical Instrument Museum](#) (MIM), shares 90 historic acoustic stringed instruments played by the heroes of folk, blues, and bluegrass music. These instruments illuminate the intertwined histories of exceptional soloists and songwriters, groundbreaking instrument manufacturers, and novel inventions, illustrating how diverse origins combine into enduring musical traditions.

“These are instruments that have changed so many lives of artists and audiences alike,” says MIM senior curator Rich Walter. “Each one has a unique story and personality, but together they remind us of the shared connections within America’s most influential music.”

Presented in partnership with renowned mandolinist David Grisman and his record label Acoustic Disc, *Acoustic America* showcases a remarkable collection of instruments that have redefined music not only in the United States but around the world. Notably, more than 30 special instruments from Grisman’s personal collection will be on public display for the first time.

Exhibition highlights include:

- **Earl Scruggs’s 1928 Gibson RB-Granada banjo.** Owned, played, and preserved in original condition by Earl Scruggs, the world’s most famous and influential banjo player, this instrument is a rare treasure.
- **1935 Martin D-28 guitar played by Elizabeth Cotten.** This “Herringbone” D-28 made a significant impact on American music when folk icon Elizabeth Cotten used it to record her famous song “Freight Train” and others for Smithsonian Folkways in 1957. *Loan courtesy of Peter McLaughlin*
- **Mississippi John Hurt’s 1964 Guild F-30 guitar.** Blues legend Mississippi John Hurt picked out this guitar before playing it at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival. A young John Oates idolized and closely studied Hurt’s music and borrowed this same guitar to record the first two Hall and Oates albums in 1972 and 1973. *Loan courtesy of John Oates*
- **David Grisman’s 1925 Gibson F-5 “Fern” mandolin.** This iconic F-5 “Fern” model, notable for the elegant fern-style inlay on its peghead, is one of the most significant instruments from mandolin virtuoso David Grisman’s illustrious career. Grisman played it with the influential bluegrass supergroup Old and In the Way and with his groundbreaking original David Grisman Quintet. *Loan courtesy of David Grisman*

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- **Peter Yarrow's 12-fret dreadnought acoustic guitar.** Tireless ambassador for civil rights and social justice Peter Yarrow played this guitar when Peter, Paul and Mary joined Bob Dylan and Stevie Wonder to sing "Blowin' in the Wind" at the inaugural celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day as a national holiday in 1986. *Gift of Peter Yarrow*
- **John Hartford's A. A. Farland open-back banjo.** A favored vintage banjo played by the multitalented John Hartford, whose classic "Gentle on My Mind" became one of the most recorded songs in history. *Loan courtesy of George Gruhn*
- **Lloyd Loar's personal 1924 F-5 mandolin.** F-5 mandolins with famed Gibson acoustic engineer Lloyd Loar's signature on the label are the most valuable and sought-after in the world. This mandolin—its label dated February 18, 1924—was Loar's personal instrument, and this model is arguably his most iconic achievement.

The opening weekend of *Acoustic America: Iconic Guitars, Mandolins, and Banjos* will be celebrated with a three-day Signature Event at MIM on November 10, 11, and 12. The weekend will include family-friendly activities such as curator talks in the Target Gallery, live performances, and instrument demonstrations.

For information about opening weekend and other supplemental programming, visit MIM.org.

Presenting sponsor *U.S. Bank*

In partnership with *Acoustic Disc*

Sponsored by *John & Joan D'Addario Foundation and MaryAnn & John 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.

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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. To learn more about MIM, visit **MIM.org**.

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