

NEWS RELEASE

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Skirball Cultural Center to present BILL GRAHAM AND THE ROCK & ROLL REVOLUTION

First major museum exhibition about the legendary rock promoter explores the momentous cultural transformations of the 1960s–1980s through the lens of rock & roll

May 7–October 11, 2015

LOS ANGELES, CA—The Skirball Cultural Center presents *Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution*, the first comprehensive retrospective about the life and career of renowned music industry impresario Bill Graham (1931–1991). Recognized as one of the most influential concert promoters in history, Graham launched the careers of countless rock & roll legends in the 1960s at his famed Fillmore Auditorium. He conceived of rock & roll as a powerful force for supporting humanitarian causes and was instrumental in the production of milestone benefit concerts such as Live Aid (1985) and Human Rights Now! (1988). As a promoter and manager, he worked with iconic artists including the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, Santana, Fleetwood Mac, the Who, Led Zeppelin, the Doors, and the Rolling Stones. Organized by the Skirball, the exhibition opens May 7 and runs through October 11, 2015. The exhibition is especially timely as 2015 marks the thirtieth anniversary of Live Aid, the fiftieth anniversary of The Grateful Dead's live debut, and the fiftieth anniversary of Graham's first-ever concert.

Through memorabilia, photographs, archival concert footage, historical and new video interviews, ephemera, and psychedelic art, *Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution* is both a deeply personal reflection on Graham's life and an exploration of how Graham helped transform rock music into the immersive, multi-dimensional, and highly lucrative phenomenon of rock theater that persists today. Treasured photographs and artifacts from Graham's early life and career will be on loan from the Graham family, many on view to the public for the first time. Also for the first time ever, preparatory drawings and the original artwork of several iconic Fillmore concert posters will be on museum display, revealing the signature visual styles and creative process of poster artists Bonnie MacLean, Wes Wilson, David Singer, Greg Irons, and David Byrd.

The public will also be able to see, for the first time in more than forty years, the original apple barrel that greeted fans with fresh apples at the entrance to the Fillmore Auditorium; letters and gifts from performers and fans; and remarkable live performance and backstage photos from the Fillmore, Winterland, Day on the Green, Live Aid, and other Bill Graham Presents concerts throughout the era. An installation of "The Joshua Light Show"—the trailblazing liquid light show conceived in 1967 by multimedia artist Joshua White, which served as a backdrop to many Graham-produced shows—will be customized by White specifically for the exhibition. It will be one of several gallery components designed to evoke the sights and sounds of the era.

Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution also illuminates how Graham's childhood experiences as a Jewish emigrant from Nazi Germany fueled his drive and ingenuity as a cultural innovator and advocate for social justice. Born in Berlin, Graham arrived in New York at the age of eleven as part of a Red Cross effort to

help Jewish children fleeing the Nazis. He went to live with a foster family in the Bronx and spent his teenage years in New York City before being drafted into the U.S. Army to fight in the Korean War. He relocated to San Francisco just as the hippie movement was gathering steam, and became the business manager for the San Francisco Mime Troupe, a radical theater company that performed for free in parks. The first show Graham presented was on November 6, 1965: a fundraiser to support the legal defense of one of the Mime Troupe actors. It was a transformative moment for the thirty-four-year-old, who'd finally found something he was good at by which he could also earn a living. Soon afterwards he took over the lease on the famed Fillmore Auditorium, where he produced groundbreaking shows throughout the 1960s, including sold-out concerts by the Grateful Dead, Cream, Big Brother and the Holding Company, and the Doors, among many others. Graham's mastery at promoting, marketing, and managing artists propelled him to become one of the music industry's most important figures.

More information on *Bill Graham and the Rock & Roll Revolution*, as well as press previews, related exhibitions and concerts, and other public programs, will be announced in March.

BILL GRAHAM AND THE ROCK & ROLL REVOLUTION AND ITS RELATED PROGRAMS AT THE SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER ARE MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM:

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About the Skirball

The Skirball Cultural Center is dedicated to exploring the connections between 4,000 years of Jewish heritage and the vitality of American democratic ideals. It welcomes and seeks to inspire people of every ethnic and cultural identity. Guided by our respective memories and experiences, together we aspire to build a society in which all of us can feel at home. The Skirball Cultural Center achieves its mission through educational programs that explore literary, visual, and performing arts from around the world; through the display and interpretation of its permanent collections and changing exhibitions; through an interactive family destination inspired by the Noah's Ark story; and through outreach to the community.

Visiting the Skirball

The Skirball Cultural Center is located at 2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049. Museum hours: Tuesday–Friday 12:00–5:00 p.m.; Saturday–Sunday 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.; closed Mondays and holidays. Admission to exhibitions: \$10 General; \$7 Seniors, Full-Time Students, and Children over 12; \$5 Children 2–12. Exhibitions are always free to Skirball Members and Children under 2. Exhibitions are free to all visitors on Thursdays. For general information, the public may call (310) 440-4500 or visit skirball.org. The Skirball is also home to Zeidler's Café, which serves innovative California cuisine in an elegant setting, and Audrey's Museum Store, which sells books, contemporary art, music, jewelry, and more.

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