

NEWS RELEASE

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Skirball Cultural Center unveils details about upcoming exhibition

PAUL SIMON: WORDS & MUSIC April 27–September 3, 2017

Reimagined and expanded by the Skirball, the exhibition explores Paul Simon's creative process and indelible mark on the nation and the world.

LOS ANGELES, CA—The Skirball Cultural Center today announced details about its West Coast presentation of *Paul Simon: Words & Music*, an exhibition originally curated by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. Developed upon exclusive interviews with the artist, the show traces Simon's life and career and illuminates his creative process. On view will be instruments, records, sheet music, handwritten lyrics, photography, costumes, and stage maquettes, as well as listening stations and performance footage spanning Simon's six-decade career.

Exclusively for the Los Angeles presentation, *Paul Simon: Words & Music* will include many additional artifacts from Simon's private archive and a newly created music lab developed by the Skirball in cooperation with Roland Corporation U.S. The exhibition opens at the Skirball on April 27 and runs through September 3, 2017.

"Through his extraordinary storytelling and trailblazing exploration of sounds, Paul Simon has captured the spirit of our nation and our times, from disillusionment and fear to hope and compassion," remarked Robert Kirschner, Skirball Museum Director. "Our presentation of *Paul Simon: Words & Music* invites one and all to celebrate the life and legacy of this prolific artist, whose irresistible songwriting and landmark collaborations with artists around the world have built bridges of understanding and opened minds and hearts."

Born October 13, 1941, in Newark, New Jersey, Paul Simon rose to become one of the most influential and successful musicians of the past fifty years. Simon's fame and commercial success began as part of the duo Simon & Garfunkel, formed in 1964 with musical partner Art Garfunkel.

When the duo parted ways in 1970, Simon launched a successful solo career, recording three highly acclaimed albums over the next five years and solidifying his status as one of the great American composers of the twentieth century. In the decades since, Simon has created beautifully crafted music that draws on diverse American musical genres as well as African American, Latin, South African, and West African sounds—notably on his 1986 landmark album, *Graceland*. Simon's wide-ranging body of work is equally beloved for its musical vocabulary—style, rhythm, and instrumentation—and its compelling and poetic lyrics.

Simon has earned sixteen Grammys for his solo and collaborative work—three of which were for Album of the Year (*Bridge Over Troubled Water*, *Still Crazy After All These Years*, and *Graceland*)—as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award. He is one of a small group of two-time inductees into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame: he was inducted in 1990 with Art Garfunkel and again in 2001 as a solo artist. In 2002, Simon was a recipient of the Kennedy Center Honors. In 2006, he was among the “TIME 100,” *TIME* magazine’s prestigious annual list of the “100 men and women whose power, talent, or moral example is transforming our world.” In 2011, *Rolling Stone* magazine named Simon one of the “100 Greatest Guitarists,” then named him one of the “100 Greatest Songwriters of All Time” in 2015. Simon was the first recipient of the Library of Congress’s Gershwin Prize for Popular Song in 2007.

Paul Simon: Words & Music at the Skirball Cultural Center will be organized chronologically, with themed sections that cover Simon’s early years and Simon & Garfunkel period, his acclaimed solo work since 1971, and his songwriting process.

In the newly developed music lab, created exclusively by Roland Corporation U.S. for the Skirball, visitors will experience Simon’s recordings firsthand through various interactives. Music fans will be invited to keep the beat to “Cecilia” in a communal drum circle, manipulate tracks for “Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard” and “Wristband” using mixing equipment, and more.

The Skirball’s presentation of *Paul Simon: Words & Music* expands on the original exhibition and includes many never-before-exhibited or rarely exhibited items from Simon’s own archives. Highlights include:

- Handwritten manuscript lyrics and lyric developments for “Mother and Child Reunion,” “American Tune,” “50 Ways to Leave Your Lover,” and “Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes,” “The Boxer” scrawled on an in-flight magazine, an early draft of “Mrs. Robinson” on an envelope, and the first-ever display of “Hearts and Bones.”
- Music sheets for “Bridge Over Troubled Water,” incorrectly titled “Like a Pitcher of Water” by arranger Ernie Freeman.
- Original pressings of 45 RPM singles of “America” and “El Condor Pasa.”
- Fan letters written to Simon after the 1969 television special “Songs of America.”
- Never-before-displayed photographs of Simon from his personal archives.
- Hand-colored photograph by Edie Baskin of Simon in the famous *Saturday Night Live* turkey outfit.
- Simon’s Kennedy Center Honors medal.
- Simon’s Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song, of which Simon was the very first recipient.
- “We are the World” sheet music signed by the artists.

The exhibition also includes popular items displayed in the original Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum exhibition, including:

- Stage maquette from Simon & Garfunkel's famed concert in Central Park.
- Yamaha acoustic guitar used during the recording of *Graceland*.
- Simon's very first guitar, given to him on his thirteenth birthday by his father and used during his early musical career.
- First recording contract with Big Records signed by Simon's parents.
- Simon's copy of the rare LP of Simon & Garfunkel's first album (when they were known as Tom & Jerry), *Hey Schoolgirl*, whose title track represented their first hit.
- Simon's *Saturday Night Live* "Five-Timers Club" jacket.
- Several of Simon's Grammy Awards.
- Media stations where visitors can watch interviews with the artist conducted specially for the exhibition, concert footage, and clips from Simon's *Saturday Night Live* appearances.

Related Film Screening and Rare Evening Gallery Hours

On Friday, May 12, at 8:00 p.m., the Skirball presents a screening of the Emmy-nominated documentary *Under African Skies*, which traces the turbulent origins and lasting impact of Paul Simon's landmark album *Graceland*. Prior to the screening, the public is welcome to enjoy rare evening Museum hours and gain free admission to *Paul Simon: Words & Music*. The exhibition will be open from 6:00 p.m. through 10:00 p.m. Reservations for the late-night event and ticket sales for the film screening will open in mid-April on skirball.org.

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PAUL SIMON: WORDS & MUSIC WAS CURATED BY THE ROCK AND ROLL HALL OF FAME AND MUSEUM, CLEVELAND, OHIO.

THE EXHIBITION AND ITS RELATED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AT THE SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER ARE MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH LEAD SUPPORT FROM THE FOLLOWING DONORS:

The Material World Foundation Steve Tisch

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EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Information on press previews of the exhibition will be announced in the coming weeks.

A selection of images that may be used to illustrate editorial coverage of the exhibition may be downloaded here: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8il9r871iq8of2s/AAC-uXKNOxwaxcT2WaEHAN3va?dl=o>

About the Skirball

The Skirball Cultural Center is a place of meeting guided by the Jewish tradition of welcoming the stranger and inspired by the American democratic ideals of freedom and equality. We welcome people of all communities and generations to participate in cultural experiences that celebrate discovery and hope, foster human connections, and call upon us to help build a more just society.

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 beginning March 1, 2016: \$12 General; \$9 Seniors, Full-Time Students, and Children over 12; \$7 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.