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HONORING STAX FOUNDER JIM STEWART, IT ORGANIZATION AUCTIONS AUTOGRAPHED GUITAR TO FUND MUSIC TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

[Memphis, TN, 9/13/07] The Society for Information Management (SIM), in celebration of Stax Records' 50th Anniversary, and in honor of Stax founder Jim Stewart, will auction a one-of-a-kind autographed Gibson guitar, personally signed by Mr. Stewart, Ardent Studios founder John Fry, Isaac Hayes and a number of famous artists, producers, and engineers of the Stax era.

Proceeds from the sale of this autographed guitar will be donated to the Stax Music Academy to benefit economically disadvantaged students interested in studying the use of technology in music production and management.

The guitar is a Gibson ES-335 semi-hollowbody electric, manufactured in Memphis at the Gibson Guitar Factory.

In addition to the rare autograph of Stax founder Jim Stewart and partner/owner Al Bell, guitar signers include Oscar-winning superstar Isaac Hayes, "Soul Man" guitarist Steve "The Colonel" Cropper and bassist Donald "Duck" Dunn, both founding members of the Stax supergroup Booker T. and the M.G.s. Also signing are James Alexander and Larry Dodson of the Bar-Kays, and Hayes' former songwriting partner David Porter ("Soul Man.")

Other autographs include several of the studio musicians, songwriters, producers, and engineers that architected the Stax "Memphis Soul" sound, including: songwriter-producer Don Nix, Stax mastering engineer Larry Nix, producer Terry Manning, guitarist Bobby Manuel, keyboardist Marvell Thomas (son of Rufus), Isaac Hayes' keyboardist Lester Snell and guitarist Charles "Skip" Pitts.

The guitar also bears the signatures of the iconic record producer Willie Mitchell of Hi Records / Al Green fame, and Deanie Parker, the founding CEO of the Stax Museum and Music Academy, herself a former songwriter.

The auction will open online September 14 at SIM's website
www.simnet.org/content/auction

SIMposium 2007

SIM is an association of senior information technology (IT) executives, prominent academicians, selected consultants, and other IT thought leaders built on the foundation of local chapters, who come together at the SIMposium conference each year to share and enhance their intellectual capital for the benefit of members and their organizations.

The SIM Foundation, sponsor of the auction, is a philanthropic organization whose purpose is to invest in local SIM-Chapter-based and national initiatives that advance the IT profession through the funding of educational programs, research projects, and charitable outreach.

More than 600 highly influential IT decision-makers will gather at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis for SIMposium 2007, "Technology: Taking Care of Business," to discuss current business issues, identify industry best practices, and lay the foundation for developing business alliances. The event begins October 7 and will provide three and a half days for IT leaders to take advantage of the unique combination of learning, networking, and entertainment opportunities.

SIMposium 2007 will feature presentations from three of the nation's top CIOs as ranked by Baseline Magazine, eWeek, and CIO Insight: Rob Carter, CIO, FedEx (#7), SIM President Jim Noble (#8), and Tim Stanley, CIO, Harrah's Entertainment (#21).

The Memphis SIM Chapter, which has been planning SIMposium 2007 for nearly a year, chose Memphis Food & Music as the conference entertainment theme. Activities and celebrations during the conference will highlight the three pillars of Memphis music: Elvis (Rock & Roll), Beale Street (Blues), and Stax (Memphis Soul).

Each year, the local Chapter, through their fundraising efforts, donates funds to local institutions for the furtherance of information technology education and has supported the Memphis Public Library's Summer Teen Tech Camp as well as endowing scholarships at the University of Memphis and LeMoyne-Owen College. This year the group will present a check to Soulsville to seed a program in music technology – the use of computers in the creation, recording, and management of music.

The International Paper Foundation supports local organizations where our employees are active volunteers, and are pleased to present a check to Soulsville in honor of the volunteer work of employees involved with the SIM Memphis Chapter. Through this employee involvement, the chapter will support Soulsville's music technology program.

An industry standard

The guitar being auctioned online is a classic model. The ES-335 (in Cherry Red), produced by the Gibson Guitar Factory in Memphis, was the world's first commercial semi-hollowbody electric. The model has been in continuous production since 1958. One played

by Eric Clapton when he was in the band Cream auctioned for \$847,500 and is now in the Gibson Museum.

The ES-335 was the first of a series of semi-acoustics Gibson has designed. B.B. King's famous "Lucille" was actually a modified version of the later model ES-345 guitar, omitting the f-holes. Famous ES-335 players include bluesman Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and rock-and-roll pioneer Roy Orbison.

Online auction

The guitar auction starts at SIM's website September 14, and ends at 8:00 pm Tuesday, October 9th, just as conference participants gather for a gala at the Gibson Guitar Factory, featuring a factory tour, dinner, and a performance by legendary Stax recording artists, the Bar-Kays, with special guests to be announced later. Bidders must be SIM members, registered SIMposium attendees or sponsors.

If the reserve price is not met by October 9, the SIM Foundation will place the guitar for sale on a national auction site.

For more information, or to learn about and register for the conference, visit www.simpodium.simnet.org.

Getting the autographs

Susan Caldwell, entertainment co-chairperson for the conference, came up with the idea for a guitar auction while visiting Gibson Guitar Factory, later chosen as one of the conference venues.

The committee considered various options, such as commissioning a local artist to customize the guitar, but, in the end, they decided to use an unmodified guitar and have it autographed by Stax music celebrities. To accomplish that, Susan turned to friends Novella Smith Arnold and Michael Cromer, a retired computer industry executive.

Having been production chief at Stax in the in the mid-70s, Arnold knows the artists and engineers in the Stax community. She set to work in mid-August to gather the signatures, taking her husband along as an additional witness and photographer.

The first person to sign was Jim Stewart, at his home. Two days later, thanks to the gracious help of owner-founder John Fry, Novella visited the famed Ardent Studios, just as Steve Cropper, "Duck" Dunn, and others were gathering for a week of recording sessions with the visiting Australian Idol, Guy Sebastian.

Right after he signed it, Steve Cropper became the first person to actually play the guitar. He gave it a quick tune-up and strummed a few bars of "Soul Man", the song he played in the Aykroyd-Belushi movie *Blues Brothers*.

Over the following weeks, Arnold tracked down Stax celebrities, meeting some as they visited Memphis from out of town, and gathered signatures on the guitar. Virtually all of the signings were photographed and these digital images will be provided to the winning bidder, along with an affidavit of authenticity.

Arnold is something of a celebrity herself, with radio careers both in Memphis and earlier in Houston. One of the first black female deejays, she was inducted into the Black Radio Hall of Fame along with James Brown in 1991.

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Media contacts

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