



ROCK AND ROLL
HALL OF FAME + MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Margaret Thresher at 216.515.1215 or mthresher@rockhall.org

Reena Samaan, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, (216) 515-1503, rsamaan@rockhall.org

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum will feature ELVIS 1956: Photographs by Alfred Wertheimer

CLEVELAND (August 10, 2010) – The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum will unveil its latest exhibit devoted to the King of Rock and Roll as a part of the Museum’s 15th anniversary celebration this September. ELVIS 1956: Photographs by Alfred Wertheimer will open to the public on Monday, September 13, in the Circular Gallery of the Main Exhibit Hall. Taken during the year Elvis turned 21, Alfred Wertheimer’s photographs are a remarkable visual record of a defining time for rock and roll’s most enduring figure.

1956 was the year Elvis first appeared in the national consciousness. His RCA records and national broadcast helped make him a star. Alfred Wertheimer, then a young freelance photojournalist, was there to document the extraordinary transition.

ELVIS 1956 is the first and last unguarded look at Elvis, featuring images of him in every aspect of his life—from performance and with the fans, to the recording studio and at home with his family. On stage and off, Elvis defined the notion of “rock style.” His electrifying synthesis of rhythm and blues, gospel, and country bridged traditional divides between white and black, urban and rural. For tens of millions of fans, Elvis transformed the beat of everyday life. His music and style helped launch a cultural revolution.

In addition, the Rock Hall has on display nearly 30 new items on loan from the Graceland Archives and are located next to the photography exhibit. Highlights include:

- Shirt and belt Presley wore for performance rehearsals in 1970. Seen on the poster for the film *Elvis: That’s the Way It Is*.
- Hand-painted poster for Presley’s February 1955 performance in Memphis.
- Presley’s 1974 Grammy Award for Best Inspirational Performance for “How Great Thou Art,” the handwritten set list and jumpsuit from the show where the performance was recorded.
- Proclamation from the City of Memphis declaring February 25, 1961 to be Elvis Presley Day .
- A 1974 Guild acoustic guitar used by in concert by Presley in 1976.

Tune in to SIRIUS XM's Elvis Radio, SIRIUS channel 13 and XM channel 18, on Tuesday, August 10 at 12 p.m. ET to hear a special guest DJ session with the Rock Hall's Howard Kramer who will talk about his favorite songs from 1956. The guest DJ session will also feature Elvis Presley Enterprises' archivist Angie Marchese. For more information, visit www.sirius.com/elvisradio or www.xmradio.com/elvisradio.

The photo exhibition catalogue, ELVIS 1956 is illustrated with 72 tri-tone photographs and features an introduction by curator, Chris Murray, with essays by E. Warren Perry, Jr. and National Portrait Gallery historian, Amy Henderson. Visit www.welcomebooks.com/elvis1956 for more information about the book. This exhibition has been organized in cooperation with Govinda Gallery, Washington D.C.

ELVIS 1956 will be open through January 2, 2011.

About Elvis Presley

Elvis Presley is the undisputed King of Rock and Roll. He rose from humble circumstances to launch the rock and roll revolution with his commanding voice and charismatic stage presence. In the words of the historical marker that stands outside the house where he was born: "Presley's career as a singer and entertainer redefined popular music."

Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi, on January 8, 1935, and grew up surrounded by gospel music of the Pentecostal church. In 1948 the family moved to Memphis, where he was exposed to blues and jazz on Beale Street. After graduating from high school in 1953, an 18-year-old Presley visited the Memphis Recording Service - also the home of Sun Records - to record his voice. Owner/producer Sam Phillips was struck by the plaintive emotion in Presley's vocals and subsequently teamed him with guitarist Scotty Moore and bassist Bill Black. In July 1954 the trio worked up "That's All Right" and "Blue Moon of Kentucky" - blues and country songs, respectively - in a crackling, uptempo style that stands as the blueprint for rock and roll.

After five groundbreaking singles, Presley's contract was sold to RCA Records and his career quickly took off. "I Forgot to Remember to Forget" - his last single for Sun and first for RCA - went to #1 on the country charts. "Heartbreak Hotel," a haunting ballad, became his first across-the-board hit, holding down the top spot for eight weeks. Presley's hip-shaking performances on a series of TV variety shows, including Ed Sullivan's, generated hysteria and controversy. From blistering rockers to aching balladry, Presley captivated and liberated the teenage audience. His historic string of hits in 1956 and '57 included "Don't Be Cruel," "Hound Dog," "Love Me Tender," "All Shook Up" and "Jailhouse Rock."

Presley's career momentum was interrupted by a two-year Army stint in Germany, where he met his future wife, Priscilla. For much of the Sixties, he occupied himself with movie-making and soundtrack-recording. His albums of sacred songs, such as How Great Thou Art, stand out from this otherwise fallow period. Presley's standing as a rock and roller was rekindled with an electrifying TV special, simply titled Elvis and broadcast on December 3, 1968. He followed this mid-career renaissance with some of the most mature and satisfying work of his career. Recording in Memphis, he cut such classic tracks as "In the Ghetto," "Suspicious Minds" and "Kentucky Rain" with the soulful, down-home musicians at American Studio.

If the Fifties were devoted to rock and roll and the Sixties to movies, the Seventies represent the performing chapter in Presley's career. He toured constantly, performing to capacity crowds around the

country until his death. Presley died of a heart attack at Graceland, his Memphis mansion, on August 16, 1977. He was 42 years old. Statistically, he holds records for the most Top Forty hits (107), the most Top Ten hits (38), the most consecutive #1 hits (10) and the most weeks at #1 (80). As far as his stature as a cultural icon, which continues to grow even in death, writer Lester Bangs said it best: "I can guarantee you one thing - we will never again agree on anything as we agreed on Elvis."

About the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, Inc. is the nonprofit organization that exists to educate visitors, fans and scholars from around the world about the history and continuing significance of rock and roll music. It carries out this mission through its operation of a world-class museum that collects, preserves, exhibits and interprets this art form and through its library and archives as well as its educational programs.

The Museum is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. On Wednesdays (and Saturdays through Labor Day), the Museum is open until 9 p.m. Museum admission is \$22 for adults, \$18 for adult residents of Greater Cleveland, \$17 for seniors (65+), \$13 for youth (9-12), children under 8 and Museum Members are always free, for information or to join the membership program call 216.515.8425. For general inquiries, please call 216.781.ROCK(7625) or visit www.rockhall.com. The Museum is generously funded by Cuyahoga County residents through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture.

###