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**Queen: The Studio Experience Montreux**

**Exhibition to open December 2, 2013**

**Sponsored by the Mercury Phoenix Trust, Fighting Aids Worldwide, and**

**supported by the Fondation du Casino Barrière Montreux**

Much has been written over the years about rock legends Queen’s mastery as musicians, songwriters and live performers. Less has been learned of the inside workings behind the shaping of the music which yielded four decades of pop hits, rock classics, and inspired countless young musicians to find their own place in music history.

Coming in the year which has marked the 40th anniversary of the release of their first single and album, a new Queen exhibition, ‘Queen: The Studio Experience Montreux’, is to offer a rare insight into one of the most significant periods of their recording years. The exhibition will open December 2, to mark World AIDS Day.

The Mountain Studios sessions saw Queen at their most demanding – both of themselves and those who worked around them. Freddie’s proclamation, *“I want it to sound like a herd of Wildebeest stampeding from left to right,”* was one such typical moment recalled by David Richards, then studio engineer, and later their producer. *“Queen had no interest in what might have been done before. They were always looking for something new. So you would have to invent a way.”*

Covering Queen’s sessions in Swiss based Montreux Mountain Studios where they regularly recorded between 1978 – 1995 and where they created the bulk of tracks for six of their most popular albums, the exhibition will offer the opportunity to experience the environment and surroundings in which the band created so many classic tracks.

The exhibition, which is under the auspices of the Mercury Phoenix Trust, will particularly highlight Freddie Mercury’s personal ties with Montreux and the studio where in his final months Freddie would spend as much time as his health would allow, recording his very last vocal tracks.

Dedicated to Freddie, the exhibition is being staged by the Mercury Phoenix Trust, the HIV AIDS charity set up in Freddie’s name to fight HIV AIDS worldwide. It will use the exhibition as a backdrop to furthering awareness of its programme of education and global funding in the worldwide fight against AIDS.

Its work in staging the exhibition is enabled through the sponsorship of the Fondation Casino Barrière Montreux, with the support of the Montreux Casino Barrière, the original home of Mountain Studios.

Michel Ferla, Fondation president, says: “*The Fondation du Casino Barrière is proud to have been able to* support the development and creation of‘Queen: The Studio Experience Montreux’ *at the Montreux Casino where it all started and to bring attention to how Queen contributed to the cultural musical heritage of the town.”*

‘Queen: The Studio Experience Montreux’ will faithfully recreate within the Montreux Casino complex the rooms which originally housed Mountain Studios during the Queen recording years (the studio moved out in 2003 for renovation reasons). These revived spaces will be used to display extensive memorabilia from the original studio and from the band’s personal archives of the period: original Queen handwritten song lyrics, band members’ own instruments and costumes, studio tape boxes - many showing the original and subsequently changed titles of tracks, as well as combining specially created interactive audio and visual environments.

The ‘Queen: The Studio Experience Montreux’ is curated by Queen official archivist Greg Brooks and designed by Marmalade London whose previous assignment for Queen was the creation of the resoundingly successful ‘Stormtroopers in Stilettos’ exhibition, originally staged in London in February 2011 to mark the band’s 40th Anniversary. Says Marmalade London’s David Simpson:

*“Following the success of the London project, which was attended by more than 22,000 visitors over a ten day period, it is a great privilege for us to now design a permanent exhibition as a celebration of the band's extraordinary achievements. The Swiss town was not only an invaluable retreat for the members of the band, but also a place where so many iconic tracks were conceived and recorded. The combination of footage, costumes, memorabilia, interactive displays and storytelling makes this a compelling exhibition, not only for existing devotees, but also as an introduction to nurture a new generation of fans.”*

The exhibition centrepiece will be the original control room used by the band and where Freddie recorded his final vocals, complete with the actual microphone used in those sessions. Visitors are even given the opportunity to sit in the very studio chair Freddie used in those final days of recording, and to take control of legendary producer/engineer David Richards’ mixing desk to create custom mixes of Queen tracks. Initial tracks offered will come from the band’s final Montreux album, “Made in Heaven”. For anyone who has ever wanted to hear a favourite Queen song without guitars, drums or bass, pull up just the piano and backing vocals, or hear just Freddie’s voice in solo, this will present a truly unique opportunity to do so.

Queen first recorded at Mountain Studios in 1978, turning to the studio to complete their seventh studio album, “Jazz”, which they had begun recording in the South of France. A year later Queen took ownership of the studio, which they retained until early 1993.

Following their introduction to the studio with the “Jazz” sessions, five further albums were worked on there, as well as the studio being used by Roger Taylor and Brian May for solo work. Mercury chose Mountain to record a substantial part of his last solo work, his “Barcelona” album with Spanish operatic soprano, Montserrat Caballé.

Mercury was not at first enamoured with the idea of recording in a place with such a peaceful life as Montreux – when asked what to do with the studio once the band first took ownership, he quipped, *“Throw it in the lake.”* Freddie increasingly grew to love his new surroundings, eventually securing a lakeside apartment and taking up residence for the last period of his life, spending many of his remaining days in Mountain Studios storing vocal tracks for songs he knew would only ever be released once he was gone.

Mercury left Montreux for the last time on November 10, 1991, passing away in London exactly two weeks later, on the evening of Sunday November 24. His last work recorded there appeared on the band’s last album “Made in Heaven”, November 1995. It became one of Queen’s biggest selling albums, reaching sales of more than 20 million units across the world.

Says Brian May: *"It's strange how life takes huge turns because of what seems at the time like a small decision. Our whole association with Montreux is the result of a momentary desire to take our recording work outside Britain so we would be more focussed (about 1978, I'm thinking). We decided to try Montreux and Munich as new places to find musical inspiration together as a band. Both turned out to be massive influences on our lives, and Montreux became a kind of second home. So much of our later development is tied into Mountain Studios, so it will be nice for Queen followers to be able to experience the studio first hand, and connect to possibly the most fertile period of all in the Queen story."*

Adds Roger Taylor: *"Mountain Studios, so many memories."*

‘Queen: The Studio Experience Montreux’ will be opened by Brian May and Roger Taylor December 2, 2013. Thereafter open daily from 10:30 to 22:00. Entrance free although donations to the Mercury Phoenix Trust are encouraged.

For information on how to visit the exhibition:

[www.queenstudioexperience.com](http://www.queenstudioexperience.com)

[www.mercuryphoenixtrust.com](http://www.mercuryphoenixtrust.com)

www.fondationcasinobarrieremontreux.ch

**For exhibition photos and press material go to:** [www.queenstudioexperience.com](http://www.queenstudioexperience.com)

Access details:

username: press

password: qsemontreux2013

Or contact: [philsymes@theprcontact.com](mailto:philsymes@theprcontact.com) / [emma@idrec.com](mailto:emma@idrec.com)

Editors’ notes:

In 1996 a three metres high bronze statue of Freddie, created by sculptor Irena Sedlecká was erected in Montreux on the edge of Lake Geneva as a tribute to one of the town’s most famous former residents. It was unveiled by opera legend Montserrat Caballé on 25th November 1996.

The statue continues to draw thousands of worldwide fans to Montreux each year, especially during the annual Montreux Memorial Weekend held early each September around Freddie’s birthday (September 5).

David Richards bought Mountain Studios from Queen in February 1993. Having since moved from its original home in the Montreux Casino, the studios are now set up in the calm countryside of the Swiss Mountains.

David Richards on working with Queen:

*“The first time I met them was when they came to make the ‘Jazz’ album here. They had Roy Thomas Baker engineering. Then they decided to buy the studio and suddenly I had new employment and new bosses, and that was Queen.*

*“After the work on ‘Jazz’ and his solo album, it was Roger Taylor I remember who mentioned to the rest of the band it might be nice to try me and Mountain on a Queen album and have a different sound. And that is when I started to work with them on ‘A Kind of Magic’, which went fantastically well. After that I was regularly working with them.*

*“I think some of the most exciting moments were the improvised ones. ‘Innuendo’ was an improvisational song which they recorded here in Montreux in the Casino’s big concert hall next to the studio. We set it up as a live performance and they started playing and got into a nice rhythm and groove, and then Freddie said, ‘Oh I like that’ and rushed downstairs into the concert hall and started singing along with it. It was like a live thing which just happened – which was wonderful.”*

**Queen albums** worked on at Mountain Studios (Title/release date):

*Jazz* (1978. \*Also Superbear Studios, France)

*Live Killers* (1979)

*Hot Space* (1982. \*Also Musicland Studios, Munich)

*A Kind of Magic* (1986)

*Innuendo* (1991)

*Made In Heaven* (1995)

**Brian May:**

*Back To The Light* (1992)

**Freddie Mercury & Montserrat Caballé:**

*Barcelona* (1988)

**Roger Taylor:**

*Fun In Space* (1981)

*Strange Frontier* (1984)

**Roger Taylor The Cross:**

*Shove It* (1988)

*Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know* (1990)