



THE SOUNDTRACK TO AMERICA

It's said that jazz, blues, roots music and rock 'n' roll are America's great contributions to world culture. So isn't it about time that you suggested some of these music museums to your clients?

By Josephine Matyas

Nashville's Country Music Hall of Fame

THE BETHEL WOODS CENTER for the Arts in New York

state is located at the site of the 1969 Woodstock Festival. The centre offers a diverse selection of culturally rich performances, a museum and a range of educational programs that provide meaningful experiences in the arts.

On the outskirts of Denver, **Colorado**, there is a performance space that has been shaped by nature over some 300 million years. Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre is a unique sandstone formation of two giant monoliths that create an outdoor amphitheatre. The park includes a free visitor centre with a Performers' Hall of Fame and musical-geological tours.

The Earl Scruggs Center in **North Carolina** opened in 2014, telling the life story of the legendary banjo master along with the history and culture of his hometown. Hands-on exhibits invite visitors to play along Scruggs.

The BB King Museum and Delta Interpretive Center in **Mississippi** is built onto an old cotton gin where young

BB King ran a tractor as a boy. The museum features his personal papers, video clips and 1960s tour bus.

This month marks what would have been the 80th birthday of Elvis Presley and they'll be marking the occasion all year long at the Elvis Presley Birthplace Museum in Tupelo, Mississippi. The museum's grounds include the two-room, shotgun style house where Elvis was born during the Great Depression.

Also in Mississippi, Clarksdale's Delta Blues Museum contains remnants of the cabin where blues musician Muddy Waters lived during his days as a sharecropper and tractor driver.

The Otis Redding Foundation and Mini Museum in Macon, **Georgia**, showcases memorabilia and newspaper clippings about the soul singer. The museum site is also the front end for an educational foundation created before Redding's 1967 death, and it is lovingly managed by his family.

STAX Museum of American Soul Music in Memphis, **Tennessee**, covers the music history of soul and R&B

giants like Sam & Dave, Otis Redding, Isaac Hayes and Wilson Pickett, who all recorded at the studios. Also in Memphis is the historic Sun Studio, the birthplace of rock 'n' roll. Among the names associated with this modest recording studio are Johnny Cash and Elvis Presley. The tour is a must.

Also in Tennessee, Nashville is home to the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, with its impressive collection of exhibits and its expansive Hall of Fame.

In Muscle Shoals, **Alabama**, the Alabama Music Hall of Fame pays tribute to the state's great musicians, including Percy Sledge, Nat King Cole and Emmylou Harris. There's a wealth of musical artifacts to see, including early sheet music and stage costumes.

In **Georgia**, the Augusta Museum of History holds an impressive exhibit about James Brown. There are videos of his performances, colourful costumes and an audio tour.

In Phoenix, **Arizona**, the massive Musical Instrument Museum contains an incredible display of

instruments from across the globe. Programmed headphones activate as you approach displays.

Bristol, **Virginia**, is home to the new Birthplace of Country Music Museum. The museum celebrates the recordings of the 1927 Bristol Sessions and the birth of country music.

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in **Ohio** is a world-class museum that aims to educate visitors about the history and continuing significance of rock and roll music. A large collection of iconic artifacts and special exhibits explore the past, present and future of music.

And in **Michigan**, Detroit's Motown Museum explores the music that came out of Hitsville USA, including the work of Diana Ross & the Supremes, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and the Jackson 5. *

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