

PRESS RELEASE

V&A goes ‘one step beyond’ celebrating 40 years of Madness with acquisition of the band’s instruments and costumes

Issue date: Embargoed to 10.00, 16 May 2019

vam.ac.uk | @V_and_A



Today, the V&A announces that it has acquired a selection of objects charting the 40-year history of the band Madness. This includes a newspaper print suit worn in the music video for the 1986 single ‘(Waiting for) The Ghost Train’ and on the cover for the band’s greatest hits album *Utter Madness*, as well as a saxophone played by Lee Thompson at the London Olympics closing ceremony in 2012.

A British band from humble beginnings in London’s Camden Town, the self-proclaimed ‘Nutty Boys’ have achieved global success with 15 top-ten singles, 12 studio albums, a film and a musical. A ‘British pop institution’*, Madness’s diverse influences include ska, two-tone, East-end Music Hall songs and variety shows, resulting in a unique look and sound that gave birth to era-defining hits like ‘Driving in My Car’ and ‘Our House’.

Newly acquired objects include Lee Thompson’s London Olympic Ceremony Union flag kilt costume, published sheet music including for hits including ‘Baggy Trousers’, the complete run of the Madness comic – *Nutty Boys*, a typescript for *Our House* – the Madness Musical and a collection of posters, badges and tour t-shirts. Highlights from the collection are now on display in the V&A’s Theatre and Performance galleries, celebrating 40 years of the band.

Simon Sladen, Senior Curator of Modern and Contemporary Performance, said: “It’s wonderful to welcome the Nutty Boys to the Victoria and Albert Museum’s Theatre and Performance Collections. Madness’s influences are as varied as our collections themselves, from Music Hall to Variety, Ska to Two-Tone, with their impressive career encompassing not only a film and chart topping singles and albums, but also inspiring a stage musical. They play with and are a part of British iconography and continue to entertain us forty years after first getting together in Camden.”

The V&A is home to the UK’s national collection of theatre and performing arts related materials, from theatre and ballet to opera, musicals and rock and pop. Founded in the 1920s, the collection includes set models, designs, stage props, costumes, original posters, paintings

and photographs, representing live performance in Britain over the last 350 years. The selection of Madness objects joins Theatre and Performance acquisitions including the Glastonbury Festival Archive, Pete Townshend's guitar and costumes worn by Tina Turner.

- ENDS -

Notes to Editors

- ***The Guardian**

For further PRESS information please contact the V&A press office on 0207 942 2502 or email c.walker@vam.ac.uk (not for publication).

High resolution press images can be downloaded from <http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk>