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**CROSSROADS GUITAR AUCTION REALIZES \$7,438,624
AT CHRISTIE'S NEW YORK**

*Three New World Auction Records Set at Guitar Auction Organized by Eric Clapton & Friends
for Crossroads Centre at Antigua*

New York – In a thundering two-hour sale, carried by waves of fierce bidding and outbursts of devotional excitement, many Eric Clapton fans saw their dreams come true. In the fully packed James Christie salesroom at Rockefeller Center, bidders from all over the world competed passionately to acquire guitars from Eric Clapton's collection or instruments donated by his musician friends such as Jimmie Vaughan and Pete Townshend. The sale was 100% sold and totaled \$7,438,624, easily eclipsing the \$5 million result achieved for the first Eric Clapton sale organized by Christie's in 1999. The top lot of the evening was 'Blackie,' the black and white composite Fender Stratocaster that served as Clapton's sole stage and studio guitar from 1970 till 1985. 'Blackie' was sold for \$959,500, becoming the most expensive guitar ever to have been sold at auction. Proceeds of the sale will benefit Crossroads Centre in Antigua, an addiction treatment center established by Eric Clapton in 1998.

Upon hearing the results of tonight's sale, Eric Clapton, who is currently touring the country, commented: "I am thrilled at the result which is going to be of enormous help to us in achieving our long term aims at the Centre. On behalf of myself, but above all on behalf of all the future clients who will benefit from the enhanced facilities at the Centre, and those who will receive free or assisted treatment as a result of this sale, I want to say a big 'thank you' to all of those who have

come along today and played a part in making this for me and everyone connected with the Centre, a very memorable occasion.”

Tim Sinnott, Executive Officer of Crossroads Centre, who was present during the sale and its five-day viewing, said afterwards: ”Mr. Clapton’s generosity to Crossroads Centre Antigua is an overwhelming gift to people in need of recovery resources. The funds from the Guitar Auction at Christie’s will help Crossroads in many different areas, including the completion of the 16-bed half-way house, The Bevon House, and the continuation of Crossroads international financial assistance programs. The impact of this auction will enable Crossroads Centre to sail into the future to fulfill the mission and vision of its founder and chairman: to provide affordable, accessible and quality addiction rehabilitation treatment.”

One of the most significant guitars to come up for sale was undoubtedly ‘Blackie,’ the composite Fender Stratocaster, circa 1956/1957, which in Eric Clapton’s own words “has become part of me.” Clapton has tremendous affection for this guitar, and had an intense working relationship with Blackie throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. Offered with a \$100,000–150,000 estimate, ‘Blackie’ sold for \$959,500, breaking a world auction record for any guitar. The first copy of the ‘Eric Clapton Signature Stratocaster,’ modeled after ‘Blackie’ and extensively used by Clapton from 1990 onwards was bought for \$231,500 against an estimate of \$8,000–12,000.

A credible rival to ‘Blackie’ in stellar ranking was Clapton’s 1964 cherry-red Gibson ES-335. This famous Gibson is the second electric guitar Eric Clapton ever bought, and the one he is most sentimental about. Clapton used this guitar throughout his remarkable career, from his time with the Yardbirds until today. The Gibson was offered with its case, which has the word ‘Cream’ and the initials ‘EC G ES’ stenciled in white paint on the exterior and also carries a label inscribed by Lee Dickson “Auction(Sadly!).” The intense bidding war sent shocks of excitement through the room and when the hammer finally came down the price had soared to \$847,500 against a \$60,000–80,000 estimate. It is a world auction record for any Gibson guitar.

The instrument that changed the role of the acoustic guitar in rock music forever was the 1939, 000–42 Martin Clapton played on the ‘Unplugged’ album. Against a \$60,000–80,000 estimate, it sold for \$791,500, a world auction record for any Martin guitar.

‘Crash 3,’ Clapton’s newest graffiti Fender Stratocaster has a unique story. Used by Clapton since the start of the 2004 concert tour, the guitar was scheduled to come to Christie’s after the Dallas Crossroads Festival in early June. However, Clapton liked it so much that he decided to continue playing it for as long as he could. ‘Crash 3’ finally arrived at Rockefeller Center this morning, fresh from Clapton’s hands and was knocked down tonight for \$321,100. Decorated by the famous

street-artist Crash, the Graffiti Stratocaster has become Clapton's first choice working guitar. This is the first of Clapton's collection of graffiti guitars to appear on the market.

Other spectacular prices were achieved for 'Ivan,' the 12-string guitar Clapton co-designed with Tony Zemaitis in 1969 (\$253,900); a custom, gold-leaf decorated Fender Stratocaster, numbered EC-1, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the model (\$455,500); and 'The Rainbow Rod,' a Fender Stratocaster, circa 1996, with an iridescent finish, created by Roy Brizio, the famed Californian hot rod builder (\$220,300).

From the group of guitars donated by musician friends to support the Crossroads Centre, the spectacular 'Lenny,' the Fender Stratocaster Stevie Ray Vaughan played from the 1970s onward until his tragic death in 1990, was an absolute highlight. The guitar was donated by Stevie Ray Vaughan's brother, Jimmie, from the estate of SRV. It is the only personal guitar from SRV to have been released from the Estate into the public domain and it sold tonight for \$623,500, the second highest price for a Fender Stratocaster.

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