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PLAYING THE WRIGHT NOTES AT FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S HOME AND STUDIO

The Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust will receive a Steinway Model O piano originally bought by Frank Lloyd Wright for his Oak Park Home and Studio

OAK PARK, IL (September 3, 2008) – Visitors to the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio might discover a more authentic sound in the home beginning this October. Thanks to Anne Wright-Levi, Karen Lloyd Wright and Kimberly Lloyd Wright, the great-granddaughters of Frank Lloyd Wright, the Home and Studio will receive the 1913 Steinway Model O baby grand piano Mr. Wright purchased for his family.

“The Wright family has been very generous in contributing furnishings and artifacts to the Home and Studio to replicate the life of the family during their Oak Park years,” said Joan Mercuri, President and CEO of the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust. “We have guided the restoration process and welcomed visitors to the Home and Studio since 1974, and we’ve always sought engaging and authentic guest experiences. The return of the piano to the playroom is another addition to the integrity of the museum.”

David Wright, the son of Frank Lloyd Wright and grandfather to Anne, Karen and Kimberly, was instrumental in advising the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust while restoring the Home and Studio in the 1970s. In years past he described how music was a seminal part of his and all of his siblings’ childhoods. He explained how children would often sing while their mother, Catherine Tobin, played the piano. Frank Lloyd Wright, who was taught to play the piano by his father, was known to improvise from time to time as well.

Since the restoration, a period piano has hung from an iron strap located above the back staircase, thus exposing only the keyboard and the two front legs to the playroom as Wright designed it in 1895. The piano was tucked into a recess in such a way that it took up minimal floor space and the entire back end hung out of the room. The Steinway piano that David and his wife Gladys’ estate is donating has been in the Wright family for eighty-five years.

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Early in the summer of 2008, the piano was collected from David and Gladys' Scottsdale home, which incidentally, was designed by Wright. The piano then made the cross-country trip from Arizona to Illinois, in a climate controlled truck specialized for transporting pianos. Arriving safely in the Chicago area, it was taken to a piano restorer who replaced some of the non-original parts with period Steinway pieces.

"The piano needs to go back to where it came from, it belongs where it came from," said Anne Wright-Levi. Even though the piano has been returned to the Home and Studio, it comes back with many more layers of history, and a richer legacy than it left with. As the piano will be conserved in perpetuity, this gift will serve as a permanent reminder that the Oak Park house is not just Wright's home, but the Wright family home.

About The Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust

The Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust engages the public in educational and aesthetic experiences to foster an appreciation of architecture, design and the legacy of Frank Lloyd Wright. The Preservation Trust presents two Wright structures as public historic architecture museums, his remarkable Home and Studio in Oak Park, Illinois and his Prairie style masterpiece, the Robie House in Chicago. The Preservation Trust is responsible for restoring and preserving the two Wright sites they manage, including the current multimillion dollar restoration of Wright's Robie House. More information on the many restoration, preservation and education programs of the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust can be found at GoWright.org.

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