



PIAF

The BnF organizes a major exhibition to celebrate Edith Piaf's birth centenary. Hundreds of various documents – sound and written documents, images – evoke the destiny of a street singer who became a popular idol and an international icon. A moving tribute is so paid to one of the most famous voices of French music.

“Allez, venez Milord...”, “Non, rien de rien... », « Si un jour la vie t'arrache à moi... » : we all know Edith Piaf's songs. A few bars, a few words are enough to bring the ritornello back to our minds. Her voice, her life, her repertoire: everything contributed to turning the small street singer into a variety star, one of the major and worldwide famous figures of French popular culture. The Bibliothèque nationale de France proposes to discover or re-discover the notes, pictures and words that made Edith Piaf a legend. Listening to and looking at these documents, visitors will realize their emotional power but also their major part in the French cultural history and collective memory.

Visitors will have the opportunity to re-discover the important moments of the singer's life and career. They will also be invited to see her from various points of view: how the daughter of travelling performers became the symbol of the French people; by what miracle she keeps being adulated by her admirers, whether famous or anonymous; how a simple singer of realist songs could be transformed into a unique and admired artist; how, as a singer but also as a lover, she personified all the shades of love, from the most tragic one to the happiest, from the most submissive love to the most non-conformist. The exhibition will also show how Piaf's talent was recognized thanks to radio, music industry and press; until art, media, cinema and television took hold of her image and made her a legend.

The major part of documents on display belong to the BnF's collections that surprisingly hold various elements of popular culture: photographs, letters, posters, records, sound recordings, film excerpts, magazines, mementi and the famous little black dress. These documents will be complemented by resources from the Institut national de l'Audiovisuel and the Association des amis d'Edith Piaf in particular.

Even when she became a true idol, Edith Piaf always remained a free and simple woman. The exhibition will try to show the rebellious aspect of her personality to highlight this unconventional character. For Piaf, celebrity was nothing compared to her passion for stage; money and comfort nothing compared to the company of lovers and friends; and there was no sorrow, even the worst, that could not be cleared away by a burst of laughter, a big 'J'm'en fous pas mal' (I shouldn't care).

Exhibition

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April 14th | august 23rd 2015

Galerie 2 - BnF | François-Mitterrand, Quai François-Mauriac, Paris XIII^e

From Tuesday to Saturday 10 a.m. -7 p.m.

on Sundays 13 a.m.-7 p.m.

Closed on Mondays and public holidays

Price : €9, reduced price : €7

FNAC booking number

tel: 0892 684 694 (0.34 euros TTC/mn), www.fnac.com

Curators

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under the direction of Joël Huthwohl and Bertrand Bonnieux

39 euros

BnF editions

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commémorations nationales 2015



1. Catalogue Polydor, BnF, Dpt de l'Audiovisuel

2. Edith Piaf sur la scène de l'Olympia à Paris, 1959© Georges Dudognon / adoc-photos

3. Edith Piaf, affiche Kiffer, BnF, Dpt des Estampes et de la photographie