



LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

Sandra Gioia Treadway
Librarian of Virginia

Poe: Man, Myth, or Monster Opens July 20 at the Library of Virginia

~ Exhibition Explores Master of Macabre, Acclaimed Poet, and Well-known Literary Critic~

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For Immediate Release

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(Richmond, Virginia)—To celebrate the 200th anniversary of Edgar Allan Poe's birth, the Library of Virginia, in partnership with the Poe Museum, is presenting a major exhibition exploring the myths and legends surrounding Edgar Allan Poe, America's first internationally renowned author. **Poe: Man, Myth, or Monster** covers the many facets of Poe's life. He was born in Boston in 1809 but identified himself as a Virginian.

Who is Edgar Allan Poe? He has his own action figure and comic book. He has appeared in film, television, and other people's novels. He is America's first internationally influential author, the inventor of the modern detective story, a contributor to the genre of science fiction, author of some of the most thoughtful and piercing literary criticism ever written, a lyric poet, an amateur scientist, and inventor of nearly 1,000 new words. (Think *tintinnabulation*.) Poe's influence on other authors is incalculable.

But much of what we think we know about Poe is not necessarily accurate. During his lifetime Poe often was less than truthful about his life. A University of Virginia dropout, he wrote an autobiography claiming to have graduated from the school. His account also had him traveling to Europe to fight in the Greek Wars of Independence and being imprisoned in Saint Petersburg. Subsequent biographers also were less than factual, erring either on the side of Poe the drunken madman or Poe the refined, ever-proper gentleman.

The exhibition includes three interactive stations: Poe's Words (readings from Poe), Poe in Film (the 1928 silent film *The Fall of the House of Usher*), and Fact or Fiction (visitors get to test their knowledge of Poe).

Among the more 100 (digital and original items) in the exhibition are:

A copy of *Tamerlane*, Poe's first, but not widely distributed, published book of poetry (1827)

Posters in different languages from commercial films based (however loosely) on Poe's tales

An Edgar, the annual award given by the Mystery Writers of America

Illustrations of *The Raven* by James Carling (1857–1887)

Original manuscripts of "Eulalie: a Song," "To Elizabeth," and Poe's autobiography

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Chris Semtner, curator of the exhibition, is the author of several articles on Edgar Allan Poe and serves as acting director of the Poe Museum.

Poe: Man, Myth, or Monster runs through December 5, 2009. The exhibition is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Admission is free. Monthly curator-led tours and weekly docent-led tours are available. Please call 804-692-3592 for tour information.

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About the Library of Virginia

The Library of Virginia (www.lva.virginia.gov), located in historic downtown Richmond, holds the world's most extensive collection of material about the Old Dominion and has been a steward of the commonwealth's documentary and printed heritage since 1823. The story of Virginia and Virginians has been told in many ways since 1607. At the Library of Virginia it is told through more than 110 million manuscripts and more than 1.8 million books, serials, bound periodicals, microfilm reels, newspapers and state and federal documents, each an individual tile in the vast and colorful mosaic of Virginia's experience.

Editor's Advisory: Images available upon request.