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# **Martin Scorsese's *The Blues* Kicks Off PBS Fall 2003 Season with Seven-Night Blues Television Festival**

## Seven Interpretive Films Directed by Martin Scorsese, Wim Wenders, Richard Pearce, Charles Burnett, Marc Levin, Mike Figgis, Clint Eastwood To Premiere Sunday, September 28 at 9pm on PBS

## **Series to Anchor Multi-Media Project, Sponsored by Volkswagen of America, Inc., that Includes Web Site, Radio Series, Educational Initiative, Companion Book, CDs and DVDs, and Nationwide Tour**

New York, NY—The much anticipated series, *The Blues™*, will lead PBS' new fall season beginning on Sunday, September 28th. In what is being billed as a Blues Television Festival, PBS will air the entire series over seven consecutive nights at 9pm, beginning with Martin Scorsese's film, *Feel Like Going Home* and concluding with Clint Eastwood's film, *Piano Blues*, on Saturday, October 4. Check local listings for broadcast dates and times.

Under the guiding hand of Executive Producer Martin Scorsese, and sponsored by Volkswagen of America, Inc., ***The Blues*** consists of seven impressionistic and interpretive films that capture the essence of the blues while exploring how this art form so deeply influenced people the world over. In addition to Scorsese and Eastwood, the other directors and films in the series include: Wim Wenders, ***The Soul of a Man***; Richard Pearce, ***The Road to Memphis***; Charles Burnett, ***Warming by the Devil's Fire***; Marc Levin, ***Godfathers and Sons***; and Mike Figgis, ***Red, White & Blues***. Along with Scorsese, Paul G. Allen and Jody Patton of Vulcan Productions and Ulrich Felsberg of Road Movies are executive producing the series; Alex Gibney is the series producer, Margaret Bodde is the producer and Richard Hutton is the co-producer.

"All of these directors share a passion for the blues," said Martin Scorsese. "The idea of different perspectives from filmmakers who love the music seemed like the right way to approach such personal and evocative music. Out of the seven films, all together, the audience will ideally come away with the essence of the music—the spirit of it rather than just plain facts."

Alex Gibney, the series producer, said, “Through the artistry and passion of these filmmakers, *The Blues* hopes to link the present and the past by engaging a new generation of viewers and listeners to seek out the music in clubs, festivals and concerts, even as they look back—through books, CDs and archival images—at the origins of the blues. In this way, *The Blues* will not be the last word on the subject; it will be the ‘first word’ of a new, more free-wheeling conversation.”

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“Martin Scorsese’s vision for this project is to promote and preserve this music that has meant so much to him and to pay tribute to the musicians themselves,” said producer Margaret Bodde. “It’s about the power and influence of the music. And revealing the music and its origins to kids who may not know much about the blues.”

“*The Blues* is another example of PBS’s distinctive commitment to telling the American story through the backdrop of music,” said PBS President and CEO Pat Mitchell. “We remain dedicated to American culture. And we are honored to host Martin Scorsese and the great directors he’s assembled who have made *The Blues* an engaging series that will bring music to life on the screen and have value long after broadcast on the Web, in schools and as a historical document.”

*The Blues* series will anchor a year-long celebration of events to help raise awareness of the blues and its contribution to American culture and music worldwide. Its goal is to reach as many people as possible through the following initiatives: the seven-film series on PBS; an extensive Web site at [www.pbs.org/theblues](http://www.pbs.org/theblues); a 13-part radio series on public radio stations nationwide, distributed by Public Radio International and co-produced by Experience Music Project and Ben Manilla Productions; a teacher’s guide containing blues lesson plans, teaching strategies and resource materials for high school teachers of English, Social Studies and Music also produced by Experience Music Project; a companion book published by Amistad, an imprint of HarperCollins, entitled *Martin Scorsese Presents The Blues: A Musical Journey*; value-added DVDs, a CD boxed set, individual soundtracks for each show, a single “Best of” album and individual artist recordings released collaboratively by Hip-O Records/Universal Music Enterprises and Columbia/Legacy; “On the Road,” a national schedule of film, music and heritage events celebrating the blues throughout the year; a “Salute to the Blues” benefit concert that took place at Radio City Music Hall on February 7, 2003, and a film of the “Salute to the Blues” concert for theatrical release directed by Antoine Fuqua (*Training Day*) and executive produced by Martin Scorsese.

“We are of course proud to join what we believe is a remarkable opportunity for this music as well as a celebration of the men and women who created a truly inspirational art form,” Karen Marderosian, marketing director of Volkswagen of America, said. “Our goal is to help introduce as many people as possible to this music through our support for *The Blues* on PBS and in major cities around the country.”

## About *The Blues*™

*The Blues*, executive produced by filmmaker Martin Scorsese and premiering Sunday, September 28 at 9pm on PBS, anchors a multi-media project to help raise awareness of the blues and its contribution to American culture and music worldwide. *The Blues* is a seven-film television series of personal and impressionistic films viewed through the lens of seven world-famous directors who share a passion for the music. The films, by Charles Burnett, Clint Eastwood, Mike Figgis, Marc Levin, Richard Pearce, Martin Scorsese, and Wim Wenders, capture the essence of blues music and delve into its global influence—from its roots in Africa to its inspirational role in today’s music. Four of the seven films are written by Charles Burnett, Robert Gordon, Peter Guralnick, and Wim Wenders. Sponsored by Volkswagen, *The Blues* project initiatives include an extensive Web site at [www.pbs.org/theblues](http://www.pbs.org/theblues); a 13-part radio series; educational outreach; a companion book, and value-added DVDs, a CD boxed set, individual soundtracks for each show, a single “Best of” album and individual artist recordings. *The Blues* project will also go “On the Road,” to a national schedule of film, music and heritage events celebrating the blues throughout the year. *The Blues* is a presentation of Vulcan Productions and Road Movies in association with Cappa Productions and Jigsaw Productions; WGBH Boston presents the series on PBS; public television funding is provided by PBS and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Along with Scorsese, Paul G. Allen and Jody Patton of Vulcan Productions and Ulrich Felsberg of Road Movies are executive producing the series; Alex Gibney is the series producer; Margaret Bodde is the producer, and Richard Hutton is the co-producer. *The Blues* is closed captioned for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers, and described for people who are blind or visually impaired by the Media Access Group at WGBH. The descriptive narration is made possible by a special grant from Volkswagen and is available on the SAP channel of stereo TVs and VCRs.