

THE BLUES™

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The Blues

“The blues is at once American and worldly. It’s a form of storytelling that is so universal that it has inspired people beyond our borders and continues to influence music here and abroad. We’re hopeful that the series will introduce new audiences worldwide to this music and also inspire kids, whether they like rock or hip hop, to better understand the struggles and genius that gave birth to what they listen to today. Our goal was never to produce the definitive work on the blues. It was, from the start, to create highly personal and impressionistic films as seen through the eyes of some of the most creative directors around with a passion for this music.”

Martin Scorsese, Executive Producer

“All of these directors share a passion for the blues. 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.”

Martin Scorsese, Executive Producer

“I’ve always felt an affinity for blues music—the culture of storytelling through music is incredibly fascinating and appealing to me. The blues have great emotional resonance and are the foundation for American popular music.”

Martin Scorsese, Executive Producer

“*The Blues* is a kind of film festival—with each film building on the one before it—that celebrates that authenticity of the blues and tells a powerful story of how that music has come to influence the world. 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.”

Alex Gibney, Series Producer

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YEAR OF THE BLUES
2012

Quotes for *The Blues*

“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. 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.”

Margaret Bodde, Producer

“**The Blues** is another example of PBS’s distinctive commitment to telling the American story through the backdrop of music. 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.”

Pat Mitchell, PBS President and CEO

“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. 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.”

Karen Marderosian, Marketing Director of Volkswagen of America, Inc.

“These songs meant the world to me. I felt there was more truth in them than in any book I had read about America, or in any movie I had ever seen. I’ve tried to describe, more like a poem than in a ‘documentary,’ what moved me so much in their songs and voices.”

Wim Wenders, Director

“**The Blues** is a chance to celebrate one of the last truly indigenous American art forms, before it all but disappears, swallowed whole by the rock ‘n’ roll generation it spawned. Hopefully we’ll get there before it’s too late.”

Richard Pearce, Director

“The sound of the blues was a part of my environment that I took for granted. However, as years passed, the blues slowly emerged as an essential source of imagery, humor, irony and insight that allows one to reflect on the human condition. I always wanted to do a story on the blues that not only reflected its nature and its content but also alludes to the form itself. In short, a story that gives you the impression of the blues.”

Charles Burnett, Director

Quotes for The Blues

“When we were shooting Sam Lay and his band at the Chicago Blues Festival, they were playing Muddy Waters’ classic, ‘I Got My Mojo Workin.’ I closed my eyes and was transported back to when I was a 15-year-old hanging in my buddy’s basement listening to the Paul Butterfield Blues Band for the first time. My life was changed that day and 35 years later the music’s still shakin’ my soul. The feel of that day in the basement is what I have set out to capture in this film.”

Marc Levin, *Director*

“I’m interested in why there was such excitement about this black music among Europeans. To that end, I’ve put together a group of these musicians, augmenting the line-up with some younger talent as well. Hopefully the resulting recording session of some blues standards, and the discussions that follow, shine some light on why at a particular moment the blues was reinterpreted abroad and reintroduced in a new form that was universally embraced.”

Mike Figgis, *Director*

“The blues has always been part of my musical life and the piano has a special place, beginning when my mother brought home all of Fats Waller’s records. Also, the music has always played a part in my movies. A piano blues documentary gives me a chance to make a film that is more directly connected to the subject of the music than the features that I have been doing throughout my career.”

Clint Eastwood, *Director*