BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2020 | PROGRAM GUIDE

MILES DAVIS: BIRTH OF THE COOL: AMERICAN MASTERS
Tuesday, February 25 • 9 p.m.
This February, WETA celebrates Black History Month with a special TV programming lineup. Many of the programs can be streamed online on the free PBS Video App. Visit weta.org for additional airdates and information.

Saturday, February 1 • 7 p.m.
WETA ARTS – Hosted by Robert Aubry Davis, the half-hour magazine-style series spotlights The Washington Revels Jubilee Voices ensemble, a Civil War reenactment group that preserves African American history and culture through a cappella music. Also featured are an interview with local filmmaker Mignotae Kebede, producer of What Happened 2 Chocolate City; a conversation with Carla Hayden, the Librarian of Congress, the first woman and the first African American to hold the post; and great ideas for your next local arts outing. Repeats Sun 2/2, 11:30 a.m.; Sun 2/16, 2 p.m.; Mon 2/24, 3:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 2 • midnight
AMERICAN MASTERS: B.B. KING – Explore B.B. King’s challenging life and career through candid interviews with the musician, filmed shortly before his death, and fellow music stars, including George Benson, Eric Clapton, John Mayer and Ringo Starr.

Sunday, February 2 • noon
BLACK AMERICA SINCE MLK: AND STILL I RISE – The WETA co-production with Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. explores the last fifty years of African American history through the eyes of scholars, celebrities and a cast of people who shaped these years. Episode 1 of 2. Out of the Shadows/Move on Up – Dr. Gates explores African American history from 1965 through the early 1980s, from Selma marches and the Voting Rights Act through the white backlash that developed during the economic downturn of the 1970s and into the Reagan era.

Sunday, February 2 • 2 p.m.
CHARLEY PRIDE: I’M JUST ME: AMERICAN MASTERS – Explore the complicated history of the American South and its music through the life of country star Charley Pride.
Monday, February 3 • 4 p.m.
AFRICA’S GREAT CIVILIZATIONS — The six-hour series, hosted by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., chronicles the continent’s history from an African perspective. Episode 1 of 6. Origins. Journey with Gates to Kenya, Egypt and beyond as he discovers human origins, the formation of early human societies and the creation of significant cultural and scientific achievements on the African continent.

Monday, February 3 • 10 p.m.

Tuesday, February 4 • 4 p.m.

Tuesday, February 4 • 8 p.m.
FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR. SEASON 6 — Join Henry Louis Gates, Jr. as he delves into the genealogy of famous Americans. Episode 7. Science Pioneers. Gates traces the family trees of pioneering scientists, such as physicist Shirley Ann Jackson, who’ve made dramatic contributions to our understanding of the world.

Wednesday, February 5 • 4 p.m.

Thursday, February 6 • 4 p.m.
AFRICA’S GREAT CIVILIZATIONS — Episode 4 of 6. Cities. Gates explores the power of Africa’s greatest ancient cities whose wealth, art and industrious successes attracted new European interest and interaction along the continent’s east and west coasts.
Thursday, February 7 • 4 p.m.

Saturday, February 8 • 10 p.m.
THE WETA MOVIE: GUESS WHO’S COMING TO DINNER – Starring Spencer Tracy, Sidney Poitier and Katharine Hepburn, this 1967 drama focuses on a white couple whose attitudes are challenged when their daughter introduces them to her African American fiancé.

Sunday, February 9 • midnight
FATS DOMINO AND THE BIRTH OF ROCK ‘N’ ROLL: AMERICAN MASTERS – The biography series explores how the musical artist’s style of New Orleans rhythm and blues became rock ‘n’ roll.

Sunday, February 9 • noon
BLACK AMERICA SINCE MLK: AND STILL I RISE – The WETA co-production with scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr. explores the last fifty years of African American history through the eyes of scholars, celebrities and a cast of people who shaped these years. *Episode 2 of 2*. Gates continues to explore the tremendous gains and persistent challenges of the post-civil rights years, examining major events and turning points in American race relations.

Sunday, February 9 • 2 p.m.
JOHN LEWIS: GET IN THE WAY – Follow the journey of civil rights hero, Congressman and human rights champion John Lewis.

Monday, February 10 • 4 p.m.
Tuesday, February 11 • 4 p.m.
PRINCE AMONG SLAVES – A film relates the forgotten true story of an African prince who was enslaved in Mississippi for 40 years before finally achieving freedom and becoming one of the most famous men in America.

Tuesday, February 11 • 8 p.m.
FINDING YOUR ROOTS WITH HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR. SEASON 6 – Episode 8. Slave Trade.
Gates journeys with film director Ava DuVernay, actor S. Epatha Merkerson and musician Questlove to the unexpected places where their ancestors were scattered by slavery, upending their notions of African American history.

Tuesday, February 11 • 9 p.m.
THE FIGHT: AMERICAN EXPERIENCE – Join us for an exploration of the 1938 boxing rematch between American Joe Louis and German Max Schmeling. In the shadow of war, they became reluctant symbols of equality and supremacy, democracy and fascism.

Saturday, February 15 • 10 p.m.
RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA AFTER THE CIVIL WAR – In this WETA co-production, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. explores the transformative years following the Civil War. Episode 1 of 2. During Reconstruction, the nation struggled to rebuild itself in the face of profound loss, massive destruction and revolutionary social change. For African Americans, despite hard-won freedom, support for their social, economic and political gains did not last.

Sunday, February 16 • midnight
INDEPENDENT LENS: TELL THEM WE ARE RISING: THE STORY OF BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES – The film explores the pivotal role historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have played over the course of 150 years in American history, culture and identity.

Sunday, February 16 • noon
SAMMY DAVIS, JR.: I’VE GOTTA BE ME: AMERICAN MASTERS – Explore the entertainer’s vast talent and journey for identity through the shifting tides of civil rights and racial progress during twentieth-century America.
Sunday, February 16 • 7 p.m.
HOLLYWOOD’S ARCHITECT: THE PAUL WILLIAMS STORY – Nicknamed “Architect to the Stars,” Paul R. Williams was one of the most successful architects in the country despite the discrimination he suffered from the early 1920s until his retirement 50 years later. His list of clients included Frank Sinatra, Cary Grant, Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz, and his name is associated with many architectural icons.

Saturday, February 22 • 10 p.m.
RECONSTRUCTION: AMERICA AFTER THE CIVIL WAR – Episode 2 of 2. Explore the rise of Jim Crow and the undermining of Reconstruction’s legal and political legacy. See how African Americans fought back using artistic expression to put forward a “New Negro” for a new century.

Sunday, February 23 • noon
MAYA ANGELOU: AND STILL I RISE: AMERICAN MASTERS – Through interviews, rare archival photographs and her own words, learn about Maya Angelou’s incredible journey, from her upbringing in the Depression-era South to her many successes as an author, poet and civil rights activist.

Sunday, February 23 • 2 p.m.
MASTERS OF RHYTHM: THE AFRO-PERUVIAN WAY – Three of the world’s finest percussionists come together to jam. Filmed in Peru, and supplemented by images of community celebrations, this documentary spotlights an unknown aspect of the African diaspora.

Sunday, February 23 • 7 p.m.
A MUSICAL EVENING WITH HARRY LENNIX – A part of The HistoryMakers, the nation’s largest African American video oral history archive, the program celebrates the life and career of the actor through singing, storytelling and theatrical readings. A native Chicagoan, Lennix currently stars as Harold Cooper, Assistant Director of Counterterrorism for the FBI on the NBC series The Blacklist.
Monday, February 24 • midnight
SMOKEY ROBINSON: THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS GERSHWIN PRIZE FOR POPULAR SONG
— While enjoying this WETA co-production, get your toes tappin’ and your memories ignited during this celebration of singer-songwriter Smokey Robinson, winner of the 2016 Gershwin Prize for Popular Song.

Monday, February 24 • 4 p.m.
AN EVENING WITH DEBRA LEE – This HistoryMakers program features an interview with one of the most influential female voices in the entertainment industry. Lee served as the Chairman & CEO of BET Networks. During her tenure, Lee helmed BET’s reinvigorated approach to corporate philanthropy and authentic programming that led to such hits as Being Mary Jane, The BET Awards, Black Girls Rock! and many more.

Monday, February 24 • 9 p.m.
INDEPENDENT LENS: BLACK MEMORABILIA – The film explores the world of racially-charged objects, both antique and newly produced, that propagate demeaning representations of African Americans. From the South to Brooklyn to China, the film shines a light on those who reproduce, consume and reclaim black memorabilia.

Monday, February 24 • 10 p.m.
INDEPENDENT LENS: ALWAYS IN SEASON – In 2014, African American teenager Lennon Lacy was found hanging from a swing set. His mother believes he was lynched. Stark inconsistencies and few answers from officials drive her to lead efforts in what has become an ongoing fight for the truth.

Tuesday, February 25 • 4 p.m.
ISAAC POPE: THE SPIRIT OF AN AMERICAN CENTURY – An intimate view of 100 years of American history seen through an African American centenarian who’s a spellbinding storyteller and unsung hero of war, the civil rights and workers’ movements and the tale of his—and the nation’s—spirit, loss and love.
Tuesday, February 25 • 8 p.m.

Tuesday, February 25 • 9 p.m.
MILES DAVIS: BIRTH OF THE COOL: AMERICAN MASTERS – In award-winning filmmaker Stanley Nelson’s deep dive into the world of an iconic figure in music, discover the man behind the legend. With full access to the Miles Davis estate, the film features never-before-seen footage, including studio outtakes from his recording sessions, rare photos and new interviews.

Tune in to WETA Television –
26.1/26.4 via antenna • Cox 26, 802, 1026, 1003 • Comcast 26, 800 (DC area)
Comcast 219 (Baltimore area) • DirecTV 26, 26-1 • Fios 26, 526 • RCN 26, 613 • Dish 8076

Many programs stream on the free PBS Video App

At left: SMOKEY ROBINSON: THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS GERSHWIN PRIZE, Courtesy of Smokey Robinson; INDEPENDENT LENS: BLACK MEMORABILIA, Courtesy C-Line Films; INDEPENDENT LENS: ALWAYS IN SEASON, Courtesy Caelin White.