



# AMERICAN MASTERS



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**THIRTEEN's *American Masters* Celebrates  
Two Legendary Performers in Honor of Black History  
Month with the Broadcast Premieres of  
*Sammy Davis, Jr.: I've Gotta Be Me* and  
*Charley Pride: I'm Just Me***

*Premieres Tuesday, February 19 and Friday, February 22 at 9:00 p.m. ET on PBS  
(check local listings)*

*Each documentary will be available for streaming the following day via  
[pbs.org/americanmasters](http://pbs.org/americanmasters) and PBS apps*

This February, for Black History Month, ***American Masters*** profiles two iconic performers who broke new ground in entertainment as the Civil Rights movement gathered momentum in America: Sammy Davis, Jr., and Charley Pride. ***American Masters – Sammy Davis, Jr.: I've Gotta Be Me***, the first major film documentary to examine the performer's vast career and journey for identity through the shifting tides of civil rights and racial progress during 20<sup>th</sup>-century America, premieres nationwide Tuesday, February 19 at 9:00 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings) and is available on DVD the same day through PBS Distribution. The PBS broadcast also features 20 minutes of exclusive bonus performance footage spanning Davis' 50-year career after the documentary. ***American Masters – Charley Pride: I'm Just Me*** premieres nationwide Friday, February 22 at 9:00 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings). Both

films will be available to stream the day after their respective broadcast premieres via [pbs.org/americanmasters](https://www.pbs.org/americanmasters) and PBS apps.

Sammy Davis, Jr. had an indisputably legendary career that was vast in scope and scale. His life was also complex, complicated and contradictory. Davis strove to achieve the American Dream in a time of racial prejudice and shifting political territory. A veteran of increasingly outdated show business traditions, he worked tirelessly to stay relevant, even as he frequently found himself caught between the bigotry of white America and the distaste of black America. In addition, Davis was the most public black figure to embrace Judaism, tying his identity to that of another persecuted minority. Featuring exclusive interviews with Billy Crystal, Norman Lear, Jerry Lewis, Whoopi Goldberg and Kim Novak, as well as never-before-seen photos from Davis' vast personal collection and rare footage from his performances in television, film and concert, ***American Masters – Sammy Davis, Jr.: I've Gotta Be Me*** explores the life and art of a uniquely gifted entertainer whose trajectory paralleled the major flashpoints of American society, from the Great Depression through the 1980s.

***American Masters – Charley Pride: I'm Just Me*** traces the improbable journey of Charley Pride, from his humble beginnings as a sharecropper's son on a cotton farm in segregated Sledge, Mississippi, to his career as a Negro American League baseball player and his meteoric rise as a pioneering country music superstar. Along with exclusive new interviews with Pride himself, the film incorporates original interviews with country music royalty, including Garth Brooks, Dolly Parton, Brad Paisley, Darius Rucker and Marty Stuart, as well as on-camera conversations between Pride and special guests such as Rozene Pride (his wife of 61 years), Willie Nelson and fellow musicians.

Narrated by Grammy-nominated country singer Tanya Tucker, the new documentary reveals how Pride's love for music led him from the Delta to a larger, grander world. The singer arrived in Nashville in 1963 while the city roiled with sit-ins and racial violence. But with boldness, perseverance and undeniable musical talent, he managed to parlay a series of fortuitous encounters with music industry insiders into a legacy of hit singles, a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award and a place in the Country Music Hall of Fame.

"***American Masters*** is honored to share the incredible stories of these remarkable African American trailblazers during Black History Month," said Michael Kantor, ***American Masters*** Executive Producer. "Both Sammy Davis, Jr. and Charley Pride overcame incredible obstacles to achieve great success, and each has left an indelible mark on the world of entertainment and far beyond. These documentaries celebrate their enduring legacies while revealing little-known aspects of their lives."

Additionally, a special encore presentation of the Peabody Award-winning documentary ***American Masters – Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise*** airs Monday, February 4 on PBS (check local listings) and will be available to stream the following day via [pbs.org/americanmasters](https://www.pbs.org/americanmasters) and PBS apps in honor of Black History Month.

Launched in 1986 on PBS, ***American Masters*** has earned 28 Emmy Awards — including 10 for Outstanding Non-Fiction Series and five for Outstanding Non-Fiction Special —

13 Peabodys, an Oscar, three Grammys, two Producers Guild Awards and many other honors. To further explore the lives and works of masters past and present, **American Masters** offers streaming video of select films, outtakes, filmmaker interviews, the *American Masters Podcast*, educational resources and more. The series is a production of [THIRTEEN](#) PRODUCTIONS LLC for [WNET](#) and also seen on the WORLD channel.

***American Masters – Sammy Davis, Jr.: I’ve Gotta Be Me*** is a production of THIRTEEN Productions LLC’s *American Masters* for WNET in coproduction with ZDF in collaboration with ARTE. Directed by Sam Pollard. Produced by Sally Rosenthal and Michael Kantor. Edited by Steven Wechsler. Written and co-produced by Laurence Maslon. Michael Kantor is executive producer.

Major support for ***American Masters – Sammy Davis, Jr.: I’ve Gotta Be Me*** is provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Additional support for this film is provided by The Leslie and Roslyn Goldstein Foundation, Rolf and Elizabeth Rosenthal, and Rhoda Herrick.

***American Masters – Charley Pride: I’m Just Me*** is a production of Corridor Group Productions Inc in association with THIRTEEN’s *American Masters* and ITVS. The film is directed by Barbara Hall, who is also executive producer. Co-executive producers are Greg Hall, Suzanne Kessler and Ed Lanquist. Jon Schouten is producer. Editors are Matthew Walsh and Chris Windings. Writer is John Schouten. Michael Kantor is *American Masters* series executive producer.

Support for ***American Masters – Charley Pride: I’m Just Me*** is provided by Mike and Ginny Lester.

Major support for ***American Masters*** is provided by AARP. Additional support is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Rosalind P. Walter, Seton Melvin, Ellen and James Marcus, Vital Projects Fund , Cheryl and Philip Milstein Family, The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation, The Blanche & Irving Laurie Foundation , Judith and Burton Resnick, Lillian Goldman Programming Endowment, The André and Elizabeth Kertész Foundation, Michael & Helen Schaffer Foundation, and public television viewers.

**Websites:** <http://pbs.org/americanmasters>, [@PBSAmerMasters](http://facebook.com/americanmasters), <http://youtube.com/AmericanMastersPBS>, <http://instagram.com/pbsamericanmasters>, #AmericanMastersPBS

#### **About WNET**

WNET is America’s flagship PBS station: parent company of New York’s [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#) and operator of [NJTV](#), the statewide public media network in New Jersey. Through its new [ALL ARTS](#) multi-platform initiative, its broadcast channels, three cable services (THIRTEEN PBSKids, Create and World) and online streaming sites, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than five million viewers each month. WNET produces and presents a wide range of acclaimed PBS series, including ***Nature***, ***Great Performances***, ***American Masters***, ***PBS NewsHour Weekend***, and the nightly interview program ***Amanpour and Company***. In addition, WNET produces numerous documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings, as well as multi-platform initiatives addressing poverty and climate. Through

THIRTEEN Passport and WLIW Passport, station members can stream new and archival THIRTEEN, WLIW and PBS programming anytime, anywhere.

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