

MARTIN SCORSESE presents

THE BLUES™

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MARTIN SCORSESE'S *THE BLUES* KICKS OFF PBS FALL SEASON WITH SEVEN-NIGHT BLUES TELEVISION FESTIVAL

THE BLUES Multi-Media Project, Sponsored by Volkswagen of America, Inc., To Include TV/Radio Series, Educational Initiative and Nationwide Tour

New York, NY – May 15, 2003 – *The Blues*™ project today announced that Martin Scorsese's 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 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, *The Blues* consists of seven impressionistic and iconoclastic 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: Charles Burnett, *Warming by the Devil's Fire*; Mike Figgis, *Red, White and Blues*; Marc Levin, *Godfather and Sons*; Richard Pearce, *The Road to Memphis*; and Wim Wenders, *The Soul of a Man*. 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.”

“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.”

In addition to the television series, *The Blues* radio series will also premiere September 28 on Public Radio International (PRI). The radio series is co-produced by Experience Music Project (EMP), the Seattle-based music museum that provides dynamic, multifaceted, ever-changing experiences through new and exciting explorations of American popular music, and Ben Manilla Productions. This 13-part series will explore geographical locations of importance to the blues, revealing the history of the blues from its origins to the present, as well as its ongoing legacy as the foundation of American popular music. Hosted by Grammy-Award winner Keb’ Mo’ and presented by WGBH Radio Boston, each episode will be 60 minutes long and will run over a course of 13 weeks. The series will be available to PRI’s 731 affiliate stations nationwide. Check local listings for broadcast dates and times.

Prior to airing on both television and radio, Volkswagen of America takes *The Blues* “On the Road” to a national schedule of film, music and heritage events celebrating the blues throughout the year. Volkswagen, the exclusive project sponsor, hosts highlight screenings at key film festivals and presents sneak previews at major music festivals, including the **Chicago Blues Festival** (May 29 – June 1), the **Spirit Festival in Kansas City** (July 3 – 5), **Bumbershoot Music Festival in Seattle** (August 29 – September 1), and the **Monterey Jazz Festival** (September 19 – 21). Earlier this year, *The Blues* had a presence at the **New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival** (sneak preview took place April 28th), and **Beale Street in Memphis** (May 2-4). Among the film festivals where *The Blues* has a presence at this year are **Full Frame in North Carolina** (took place April 10 – 13), the **Seattle International Film Festival** (May 22-June 15), and the **Toronto International Film Festival** (September 4 – 13). A special compilation screening also took place this winter at the **Sundance Film Festival in Utah** to kick off *The Blues* “On the Road.” Compilation reels are also being made available to other festivals around the country that want to help promote this music and join in the celebration of the U.S. Congress-declared YEAR OF THE BLUES. YEAR OF THE BLUES program elements include a Web site at www.yearoftheblues.org, “Sweet Home Chicago,” a traveling blues exhibit produced by EMP that will launch at EMP September 27 to coincide with the television and radio series premieres, and numerous public events celebrating the blues throughout the year.

Volkswagen is also underwriting an extensive educational outreach program that will tie in with the broadcast of the series and provide high school teachers of English, social studies and music with free teaching resources to help bring the blues into classrooms. Also produced by EMP, the educational materials will include on-line lesson plans, a teacher's guide with CD, and a broad range of teaching strategies and resource materials. The broadcast series-related education initiative will reach teachers this coming August.

"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."

Beyond the educational program, *The Blues* will have a major Web presence at **www.pbs.org/theblues**, where blues lovers, film aficionados, teachers, students, and others will be able to access additional information related to the series and the art form.

The Blues series on PBS is the cornerstone of an integrated multi-media project that includes, in addition to the programs described above, a companion book published by HarperCollins, entitled Martin Scorsese Presents *The Blues: A Musical Journey*; value-added DVDs, a CD box set, individual soundtracks for each show, a single "Best of" album and twelve individual artist recordings released collaboratively by Hip-O Records/Universal Music Enterprises and Columbia/Legacy; a "Salute to the Blues" benefit concert that took place at Radio City Music Hall on February 7, 2003; and a film of the concert for theatrical release directed by Antoine Fuqua (*Training Day*) and executive produced by Martin Scorsese.

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-part 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 Scorsese, Charles Burnett, Clint Eastwood, Mike Figgis, Marc Levin, Richard Pearce, 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. Sponsored by Volkswagen, *The Blues* project initiatives include an extensive Web site at www.pbs.org/theblues; a 13-part radio series; educational outreach; a companion book, and value-added DVDs, a CD box 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.

ABOUT VOLKSWAGEN OF AMERICA, INC.

Volkswagen of America, Inc., believes in supporting the creative arts and is proud to be the sponsor of *The Blues*. Founded in 1955, Volkswagen of America, Inc. is headquartered in Auburn Hills, Michigan. It is a subsidiary of Volkswagen AG, headquartered in Wolfsburg, Germany. Volkswagen is one of the world's largest producers of passenger cars and Europe's largest automaker. Volkswagen of America and its affiliates employ approximately 3,000 people in the United States and are responsible for the sale and service of Audi, Bentley, Lamborghini, and Volkswagen products through retail networks comprising in total approximately 800 independent U.S. dealers.

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