

CASSANDRA WILSON SINGS THE SONGS OF BILLIE HOLIDAY IN DAZZLING HOUR OF AUSTIN CITY LIMITS

NEW EPISODE PREMIERES OCTOBER 10th ON PBS

Austin, TX—September 28, 2015—Acclaimed jazz star [Cassandra Wilson](#) makes her [Austin City Limits](#) (ACL) debut celebrating the music of “Lady Day” in a new episode premiering this October. Wilson performs songs from *Coming Forth by Day*, a tribute to jazz and blues legend Billie Holiday for the centennial of her birth. The hourlong episode premieres **Saturday, October 10th at 8pmCT/9pm ET** on PBS as part of ACL’s new Season 41. ACL airs weekly on PBS stations nationwide (check local listings for times) and full episodes are made available online for a limited time at <http://video.pbs.org/program/austin-city-limits/> immediately following the initial broadcast. The show’s official hashtag is [#acltv](#).

Hailing from Jackson, Mississippi, multiple Grammy-winning artist Cassandra Wilson has been named “America’s best singer” by *Time Magazine*. *Coming Forth By Day* (Legacy Recordings), Wilson’s nineteenth studio album, was released in 2015 to wide acclaim, with the *Associated Press* calling the jazz innovator a “masterful interpreter of songs,” and *The New Yorker* writing, “Cassandra Wilson, jazz’s reigning diva, puts a post-modernist spin on classic Holiday performances.”

Joined by a six-piece band, including longtime collaborators John Cowherd on piano and Kevin Breit on guitar, and an eight-piece string section, Wilson digs into the Holiday songbook in her first-ever ACL appearance, taking viewers on a spellbinding journey through lush soundscapes that conjure the spirit of “Lady Day.” “The idea was to find her essence, the sacred center of her spirit and bring it through our treatment of her songs,” says Wilson. She chooses songs that span Holiday’s abbreviated career to probe beyond her personal tragedy and honor her beauty, genius and craft. Beginning with a traditional take on “The Way You Look Tonight,” the singer steps off the path for “Don’t Explain” and “You Go To My Head,” putting her distinctive spin on classic material. Wilson masterfully manipulates the dynamics of “Good Morning Heartache,” taking a seat as the band swirls around her in collective improvisation. A set highlight is “Last Song (for Lester),” an original tune penned by Wilson for Holiday’s musical soulmate, saxophonist Lester Young, imagining the song Holiday might have sung at his funeral had it been possible. It’s a beautiful tour de force, blending sadness at opportunities lost and joy for a special bond.

Wilson closes out the breathtaking set with a sardonic, defiant romp through “Billie’s Blues,” exiting the stage to rapturous applause. A tribal drum beat and the sound of chains hitting the ground signals her return for “Strange Fruit,” Holiday’s bitter ballad about pre-civil rights era lynchings. The song’s already haunting atmosphere bristles with a new tension, a sudden surge of strings and a dramatic vocal from Wilson, capped by the singer’s feedback-drenched solo

wrung from her shrieking Telecaster, channeling the howling ghosts of victims from beyond and invoking the struggles of today.

"I've been a fan of Cassandra's magical vocal stylings since her first record, and I've always dreamed of the day when she would grace the ACL stage," says ACL executive producer Terry Lickona. "The fact that she chose to come honor Billie Holiday on our show made it that much more special - lending her own unique voice to Billie's remarkable repertoire."

Cassandra Wilson Setlist:

"The Way You Look Tonight"

"Don't Explain"

"You Go to My Head"

"Good Morning Heartache"

"Last Song (For Lester)"

"Billie's Blues"

"Strange Fruit"

Season 41 Fall Broadcast Schedule (additional episodes to be announced)

October 3	2015 Hall of Fame Special
October 10	Cassandra Wilson
October 17	Sturgill Simpson / Asleep at the Wheel
October 24	Don Henley
October 31	Gary Clark Jr. / Courtney Barnett
November 7	TV On The Radio / The War on Drugs
November 14	James Taylor
November 21	ACL Presents: Americana Music Festival 2015

The complete line-up for the full 14-week season, including seven new episodes to air beginning January 2016, will be announced at a later date. Viewers can visit acltv.com for news regarding future tapings, episode schedules and live stream updates.

About Austin City Limits

ACL offers viewers unparalleled access to featured acts in an intimate setting that provides a platform for artists to deliver inspired, memorable, full-length performances. The program is taped live before a concert audience from The Moody Theater in downtown Austin. ACL is the longest-running music series in American television history and remains the only TV series to ever be awarded the National Medal of Arts. Since its inception in 1974, the groundbreaking music series has become an institution that's helped secure Austin's reputation as the Live Music Capital of the World. The historic KLRU Studio 6A, home to 36 years of ACL concerts, has been designated an official Rock & Roll Hall of Fame Landmark. In 2011, ACL moved to the new venue ACL Live at The Moody Theater in downtown Austin. ACL received a rare institutional Peabody Award for excellence and outstanding achievement in 2012.

ACL is produced by KLRU-TV and funding is provided in part by Budweiser, the Austin Convention Center Department, Dell and HomeAway. Additional funding is provided by the Friends of Austin City Limits. Learn more about Austin City Limits, programming and history at acltv.com.

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