



Austin City Limits Salutes John Prine with Season Premiere

Season 46 Premieres October 3, 2020 on PBS

Austin, TX—September 21, 2020—Live music beacon [Austin City Limits](#) (ACL) proudly opens Season 46 with a gem: a poignant season premiere featuring the best of American songwriting giant John Prine. Sadly we lost Prine in 2020 due to complications from Covid-19, but *ACL* celebrates his remarkable life and legacy with twelve classic performances, chronicling his early days from his 1978 debut in Season 3 on the program to his final appearance in Season 44 in 2018. The requiem showcases the folk hero's signature wit and wisdom, detailing the stories behind some of his most beloved songs. The installment premieres **Saturday, October 3 at 8pm CT/9pm ET**. With live music still on pause, ACL continues to provide viewers a front-row seat to the best in live performance. The series airs weekly on PBS stations nationwide ([check local listings](#)) and full episodes are made available online for a limited time at pbs.org/austincitylimits immediately following the initial broadcast. The show's official hashtag is [#acltv](#).

Called “the Mark Twain of American songwriting” by *Rolling Stone*, Prine made eight appearances on ACL over the course of 40 years, and the career-spanning hour captures his storied career, showcasing a mix of vintage fan favorites and more recent gems and includes a never-before-aired 1987 performance of his classic “Sam Stone.” Prine’s singular talent and his ability to write songs about everyday lives and the human condition were revered by generations of songwriters and the episode features a heartfelt introduction recorded by Americana star Jason Isbell; Isbell introduces the hour saying “The thing I admired most about John’s songs was the way he could step completely into someone else’s life.”

The hour opens with Prine’s 1978 ACL debut, performing a pair of solo acoustic numbers, “Fish and Whistle” and “Hello in There,” as he introduces his immense talents to a rapt audience. Prine’s 1983 appearance as part of a songwriters special, alongside peers such as Guy Clark and Rodney Crowell, is captured here; he captivates the crowd and fellow artists with a hilarious intro to the irreverent relationship saga “There She Goes.” A bonus for fans is a never-before-aired 1987 performance of the addicts elegy “Sam Stone,” with Prine sharing a moving story about a personal visit to DC’s Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The hour showcases many of his best-known songs, including early standouts “Illegal Smile” and “Paradise” from his self-titled 1971 debut. Celebrated as a great storyteller, Prine sparkles in his introduction to

“Jesus, The Missing Years” from 1992, gamely speculating on the deity’s young adulthood and Prine’s own wayward ways. Prine makes a memorable 2002 guest appearance, joining Bonnie Raitt for a gorgeous duet of the Prine-penned “Angel from Montgomery,” in a performance Raitt has called one of the highlights of her career. The hour closes with a pair of songs about mortality from Prine’s last album *The Tree of Forgiveness* during his final ACL appearance in 2018. Bouncing back and forth between spoken recitation and joyful singing on the closer “When I Get to Heaven,” the songwriter offers a good-time singalong about leaving this world on a high note. Prine couldn’t have written a better epitaph: When he gets to heaven, he tells the Austin crowd, “I’m gonna get a guitar and start a rock ’n’ roll band/check into a swell hotel/ain’t the afterlife grand?”

“Very few artists appeared on ACL more times than John Prine,” said executive producer Terry Lickona. “It was a mutual love affair – he loved doing the show, and we loved having him (8 times!!). We consider these his best performances, and as always, he will have you laughing and crying – sometimes both during the same song.”

Episode setlist:

- Fish and Whistle (1978)
- Hello in There (1978)
- There She Goes (1983)
- Sam Stone (1987)
- Illegal Smile (1987)
- Paradise (1987)
- Jesus, The Missing Years (1992)
- Everything Is Cool (1992)
- Picture Show (1996)
- Angel from Montgomery (2002)
- Summer’s End (2018)
- When I Get to Heaven (2018)

Austin City Limits has created a new opening sequence <https://youtu.be/4ZPKRvbukoM> to mark these historic times, acknowledging the challenges local Austin and Texan acts have faced during the global pandemic. The opening features Austin’s Black Pumas “Colors” and showcases many of Austin’s own homegrown talents captured at their homes and front porches, including Ruthie Foster, Ray Wylie Hubbard, White Denim, Jackie Venson, Lyle Lovett, Shawn Colvin, Black Pumas and more.

Season 46 Broadcast Line-up (six new episodes to be announced):

- October 3** **The Best of John Prine**
- October 10** **Yola**
- October 19** **Stevie Ray Vaughan 30 Years On**

October 24 **Rufus Wainwright**
October 31 **ACL Presents: 50 Years of Asleep at the Wheel**
November 7 **John Legend & The Roots: Wake Up!**
November 14 **Bonnie Raitt | Jackie Venson**
November 21 **The Mavericks**

Tune-in, log on, and let ACL be a trusted sidekick for entertainment during these challenging days. The complete line-up for the full 13-week season will be announced at a later date. Viewers can visit acltv.com for news regarding live streams, future tapings and episode schedules or by following [ACL on Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [IG](#). . Fans can also browse the [ACL YouTube channel](#) for exclusive songs, behind-the-scenes videos and full-length artist interviews.

For images and episode information, visit Austin City Limits press room at <http://acltv.com/press-room/>.

About Austin City Limits

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. Now in its 46th Season, the program is taped live before a concert audience from The Moody Theater in downtown Austin. Austin City Limits is the longest-running music series in television history and remains the only TV series to ever be awarded the National Medal of Arts. Since its inception, 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.

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

Media Contact:

Maureen Coakley for ACL

maureen@coakleypress.com

t: 917.601.1229

