

AMERICAN MASTERS



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***American Masters* Honors the Legacy of Influential Jazz Artist Hazel Scott with New Documentary Premiering February 21 on PBS**

***The Disappearance of Miss Scott* chronicles Scott's meteoric rise as a jazz talent and major Hollywood star before being blacklisted during the Red Scare**

Hazel Scott was one of the most revered stars of the early 20th century. Not only was Scott a beloved musical sensation, but she also channeled her talents into Hollywood stardom, becoming the first Black American to host their own television show. Discover her storied life, from her childhood as a musical prodigy in Trinidad to her prolific career on stage and the silver screen in the new documentary ***American Masters – The Disappearance of Miss Scott***, premiering nationwide Friday, February 21 at 9 p.m. ET on PBS (check local listings), pbs.org/americanmasters and the PBS App in honor of Black History Month.

Featuring archival footage and stills, performance clips, animation, and interviews, ***The Disappearance of Miss Scott*** is the first known documentary centering on the jazz virtuoso's life, detailing her awe-inspiring talents on the piano, how she used her star power to be an influential voice of the nascent Civil Rights Movement, and her life in Paris after being blacklisted from Hollywood during the 1950s Red Scare. Her career in the US ultimately ended after she defended herself and her colleagues in front of the House Un-American Committee,

and her story has been mostly silenced until this film. Excerpts of Scott's unpublished autobiography are voiced by Emmy Award-winning actress **Sheryl Lee Ralph**, revealing Scott as a woman who would not compromise on her beliefs, and are complemented by interviews with country star **Mickey Guyton**, actresses **Amanda Seales** and **Tracie Thoms**, jazz musicians **Camille Thurman** and **Jason Moran**, and **Adam Clayton Powell III**, Hazel Scott's only son.

Born in Port of Spain, Trinidad in 1920, Scott was a musical wonder and was trained by her mother, a classically trained pianist and music teacher. Four years later, she left the Caribbean for Harlem, New York with her mother and grandmother, and by the age of eight she was a pupil of Professor Walter Damrosch at the Juilliard School of Music.

Scott's undeniable talent led to a vibrant jazz career performing with the likes of Max Roach and Charles Mingus in some of New York City's most iconic venues, including Café Society, Cotton Club, and Carnegie Hall. Subsequently, she brought her musical skills to the silver screen, starring as herself in films like *Something to Shout About*, *I Dood It*, and *Rhapsody in Blue*. In 1950, DuMont Television Network offered Scott her own television program. "The Hazel Scott Show" featured musical performances from Scott, along with musicians Charles Mingus and Max Roach, and was nationally syndicated during its run.

As one of the biggest faces in entertainment at that time, Scott notably used her star power to stand up for those who were marginalized. She refused to play before segregated audiences, and as a Hollywood screen siren, she spoke out against unfair treatment. She led an actors strike when a film director insisted on putting his Black actors in dirty costumes and took a restaurant to court because it refused to serve her. In 1945, Scott married Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., the first Black American Congressman from the state of New York, and together they were a formidable pair advocating for social progress.

The Disappearance of Miss Scott is produced and directed by Nicole London, who produced the Emmy-winning and Grammy-nominated ***American Masters*** film *Miles Davis: Birth of the Cool* and also worked on ***American Masters*** titles *Sammy Davis Jr.: I've Gotta Be Me* and *Marvin Gaye: What's Going On*.

"I've been committed to amplifying history's most groundbreaking Black voices throughout my career, and this film is no exception," said London. "**Hazel Scott** has influenced so many contemporary greats like Alicia Keys, who has previously paid homage to Hazel Scott with a two-piano performance at the Grammys. Her impact is undeniable, and it's time that people know her story."

“Hazel Scott was an exceptional talent, but she was also incredibly brave and used her platform to speak out against the many injustices she faced and witnessed,” said Michael Kantor, Executive Producer of ***American Masters***. “I’m thrilled to partner with Nicole [London] to explore how Scott stood up against prejudice, even at the risk of losing everything.”

Now in its 39th season on PBS, ***American Masters*** illuminates the lives and creative journeys of our nation’s most enduring artistic giants — those who have left an indelible impression on our cultural landscape — through compelling, unvarnished stories. Setting the standard for documentary film profiles, the series has earned widespread critical acclaim: 28 Emmy Awards — including 10 for Outstanding Nonfiction Series and five for Outstanding Nonfiction Special— two News & Documentary Emmys, 14 Peabodys, three Grammys, two Producers Guild Awards, an Oscar, and many other honors. To further explore the lives and works of more than 250 masters past and present, the [American Masters website](#) offers full episodes, film outtakes, filmmaker interviews, the podcast “American Masters: Creative Spark,” educational resources, digital original series and more. The series is a production of The WNET Group.

The Disappearance of Miss Scott is a production of 4th Act Factual in association with American Masters Pictures, ITVS, Black Public Media, The Center for Independent Documentary Inc., and Storyline Entertainment. Sheila MacVicar is the film’s Executive Producer and Bettina Hatami is Supervising Producer. For ***American Masters***, Michael Kantor is executive producer, Julie Sacks is series producer, and Joe Skinner is digital lead.

American Masters will be available for streaming concurrent with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](#) and the [PBS app](#), available on iOS, Android, Roku streaming devices, Apple TV, Android TV, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung Smart TV, Chromecast and VIZIO. PBS station members can view many series, documentaries and specials via [PBS Passport](#). For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](#) website.

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