Press Contact:

David Clarke, The WNET Group, 212.560.3005, [clarked@wnet.org](mailto:clarked@wnet.org)

Press Materials: [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pbs.org/pressroom) or [thirteen.org/pressroom](http://thirteen.org/pressroom)

*American Masters* Presents Broadcast Premiere of *Roberta Flack* January 24 on PBS

New film tells Flack’s story in her own words and includes interviews with Reverend Jesse Jackson, Clint Eastwood, Yoko Ono, Angela Davis, Eugene McDaniels, Joel Dorn, Peabo Bryson and more

From “First Time Ever I Saw Your Face” to “Killing Me Softly” and beyond, Roberta Flack gave voice to a global soundtrack of beauty and pain, love and anguish, hope and struggle. ***American Masters: Roberta Flack*** illuminates where reality, memory and imagination mix to present music icon Roberta Flack, a brilliant artist who transformed popular culture, in her own words. With exclusive access to Flack’s archives of film, performances, interviews, home movies, photos, hit songs and unreleased music, the film documents how Flack’s musical virtuosity was inseparable from her lifelong commitment to civil rights. ***American Masters: Roberta Flack*** premieres nationwide Tuesday, January 24 at 9 p.m. ET on PBS ([check local listings](https://www.pbs.org/tv_schedules/)), [pbs.org/americanmasters](http://pbs.org/americanmasters) and the [PBS Video App](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/).

***American Masters: Roberta Flack*** provides an intimate look into Flack’s artistry, life and triumphs over racism and sexism within and outside of the recording industry. Flack’s story is illuminated through interviews with **Reverend Jesse Jackson** (political activist and minister), **Clint Eastwood** (actor, director and producer), **Yoko Ono** (multimedia artist, singer-songwriter, activist), **Angela Davis** (political activist), **Eugene McDaniels** (singer-songwriter), **Joel Dorn** (producer), **Peabo Bryson** (singer-songwriter), **Valerie Simpson** (songwriter, producer and performer), **Les McCann** (musician), **Sean Lennon** (musician) **Jason King** (music scholar, musician and author), **Ann Powers** (music critic, author) and more. In addition to Flack’s timeless music, the film also features an original score from award-winning musician **Martin Perna** of Antibalas (*Fela!: The Musical*).

A piano prodigy from an early age, Flack began studying classical piano at age 9 and was awarded a full music scholarship to Howard University at the age of 15. In 1968, moonlighting from her job as a music teacher with a regular gig at a Washington, DC, nightclub, her singular talent caught the eye of jazz great Les McCann, who arranged an audition for Flack with Atlantic Records, which led to the recording of her debut album, *First Take*. “First Time I Ever Saw Your Face,” a song from *First Take*, was personally selected by Clint Eastwood for his directorial debut *Play Misty for Me*, and it would win Flack a Grammy Award. The following year, she won a Grammy for “Killing Me Softly,” becoming the first artist to win the Grammy Award for Record of the Year in two consecutive years.

Throughout her extraordinary career, Flack established hit-making mentorships with Donny Hathaway, Luther Vandross and Peabo Bryson. Flack’s indelible career has spanned decades and produced countless hit songs, including “Feel Like Makin’ Love” and “The Closer I Get to You.” The film chronicles how, throughout her pioneering career, Flack used her powerful platform to sing about the Black experience in America. She battled opinions of her mixed-race marriage, confronted blatant racism within the recording industry and created space for Black women to produce their own music. She released her latest project, *Running*, at age 80 in 2018, and was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2020 Grammy Awards.

Now in its 36th 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 Non-Fiction Series and five for Outstanding Non-Fiction 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](http://pbs.org/americanmasters) 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.

***American Masters*** is available for streaming concurrent with broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including [PBS.org](http://pbs.org/) and the [PBS Video App](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-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](https://www.pbs.org/passport/videos/). For more information about PBS Passport, visit the [PBS Passport FAQ](https://help.pbs.org/support/solutions/5000121793) website.

***American Masters: Roberta Flack*** is a production of La Lutta Productions in association with American Masters Pictures. Produced, directed and written by Antonino D’Ambrosio (*Frank Serpico, Johnny Cash’s Bitter Tears Revisited*). George Sampas, Charlie Cohen, and Andrew Herwitz are executive producers. Mike Tyner, Yrthya Dinzey-Flores, and Axel Caballero are producers. Michael Kantor is executive producer for ***American Masters***.

Original series production funding for ***American Masters*** is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, AARP, Sue and Edgar Wachenheim III, Rosalind P. Walter Foundation, Cheryl and Philip Milstein Family, Judith and Burton Resnick, Seton Melvin Charitable Trust, The Blanche and Irving Laurie Foundation, The Ambrose Monell Foundation, Lillian Goldman Programming Endowment, Vital Projects Fund, The Philip and Janice Levin Foundation, Ellen and James S. Marcus, The André and Elizabeth Kertész Foundation, Koo and Patricia Yuen and public television viewers.

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

**About The WNET Group**

[The WNET Group](http://wnet.org/) creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the community-supported home of New York’s [THIRTEEN](http://thirteen.org/)–America’s flagship PBS station–[WLIW21](http://wliw.org/), THIRTEEN PBSKids, WLIW World and Create; [NJ PBS](https://www.mynjpbs.org/), New Jersey’s statewide public television network; Long Island’s only NPR station WLIW-FM; [ALL ARTS](http://allarts.org/), the arts and culture media provider; and newsroom [NJ Spotlight News](https://www.njspotlightnews.org/). Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group’s award-winning productions include signature PBS series ***Nature***, ***Great Performances***, ***American Masters***, ***PBS NewsHour Weekend*** and ***Amanpour and Company*** and trusted local news programs ***MetroFocus*** and ***NJ Spotlight News*** ***with Briana Vannozzi***. Inspiring curiosity and nurturing dreams, The WNET Group’s award-winning Kids’ Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series ***Cyberchase***, interactive ***Mission US*** history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading nonprofit public media producer for nearly 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including multiplatform initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding and the environment. Through Passport, station members can stream new and archival programming anytime, anywhere. The WNET Group represents the best in public media. Join us.

**About PBS**

[PBS](http://www.pbs.org/), with more than 330 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and digital content. Each month, PBS reaches over 120 million people through television and 26 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS’ broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry’s most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. Decades of research confirms that PBS’ premier children’s media service, PBS KIDS, helps children build critical literacy, math and social-emotional skills, enabling them to find success in school and life. Delivered through member stations, PBS KIDS offers high-quality educational content on TV – including a 24/7 channel, online at [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org/), via an array of mobile apps and in communities across America. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org/), one of the leading dot-org websites on the internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](https://twitter.com/pbs), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/pbs) or through our [apps for mobile and connected devices](http://www.pbs.org/anywhere/home/). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pressroom.pbs.org/) or by following[PBS Communications on Twitter](https://twitter.com/PBS_PR).

###