

# American MASTERS

**thirteen**  
WNET NEW YORK

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## press information



*AMERICAN MASTERS*  
is produced for PBS  
by Thirteen/WNET  
New York

THIRTEEN/WNET NEW YORK'S *AMERICAN MASTERS* CELEBRATES THE GREAT AMERICAN SONGBOOK AND ITS AMBASSADOR TO THE WORLD WITH **TONY BENNETT: THE MUSIC NEVER ENDS**, PREMIERING SEPTEMBER 12 ON PBS

A Clint Eastwood Presentation Directed By Bruce Ricker

Features Interviews With Alec Baldwin, Harry Belafonte, Mel Brooks, Martin Scorsese, And Gay Talese

Performances Of "Old Devil Moon," "Steppin' Out," "In A Mellow Tone," "I Got Rhythm," "The Best Is Yet To Come," "I Left My Heart In San Francisco"; And Classic Clips from *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, *Playboy After Dark*, *The Danny Thomas Show*, And *The Doris Day Show*

Amid the sylvan setting of the 2005 Monterey Jazz Festival, legendary performer Tony Bennett is singing *Fly Me to the Moon* before a record-setting crowd when the clouds part to reveal the splendor of a full moon. It is a golden moment for the iconic crooner and for his enraptured audience, which includes Clint Eastwood. The next day at Eastwood's Mission Ranch, the two music lovers talk as if trading jazz riffs in the first of several filmed conversations about starting out and starting over, heartaches and triumphs, great songs and old friends. Their casual musings are a highlight of *AMERICAN MASTERS Tony Bennett: The Music Never Ends*, which premieres Wednesday, September 12 at 9 p.m. (ET) on PBS (check local listings).

*The Music Never Ends* chronicles and celebrates the life of a consummate performer, setting Bennett's 50-plus years in the music and entertainment industries against the backdrop of a changing America. The film is a presentation of Netflix's Red Envelope Entertainment and is directed by Bruce Ricker; produced by Clint Eastwood and Ricker, in association with RPM Productions and Thirteen/WNET New York's *AMERICAN MASTERS*; written by Nick Tosches and Ricker; edited

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by Joel Cox; and executive produced by Ted Sarandos. Susan Lacy is creator and executive producer of *AMERICAN MASTERS*. Academy Award-winning actor Anthony Hopkins narrates.

Throughout his career, Bennett sampled the best of Manhattan jazz clubs, Hollywood musicals and Tin Pan Alley, moving effortlessly from Count Basie and Bill Evans to Irving Berlin, George Gershwin and Cole Porter. In *The Music Never Ends*, Bennett's evident gifts are on full display.

“The key to this project is a basic appreciation for this rich treasure trove of music – it's a cavalcade of classic show business performances,” says Lacy. “Tony Bennett is a troubadour whose talent has attracted everyone from Frank Sinatra to Christina Aguilera – he's enriched our lives for generations.”

“From the first time I heard ‘Because of You’ on the radio, Tony Bennett's been the one singer I can listen to again and again,” says producer Clint Eastwood. “What I love most about this film is the way it acknowledges Tony's contribution. He deserves to be recognized among the best of the best.”

“I wanted to place Tony and his musical career within the framework of the Great American Songbook,” says Bruce Ricker, who directed *AMERICAN MASTERS Clint Eastwood: Out of the Shadows* in 2000. “He's very aware of the beauty of American music and he really is the one carrying that torch forward.”

The man Frank Sinatra called “the best singer in the business” has sold 50 million records and earned 15 Grammy awards, including two at age 80. The story of a common man with an uncommon gift, the film includes live performances from the 2005 Monterey Jazz Festival and interviews at Bennett's Manhattan home and at a Warner Brothers sound stage in Los Angeles.

This reflection on Bennett's life and music is amplified by a rich historical archive and the voices of numerous close friends, including director Arthur Penn, who shares memories of World War II, and Harry Belafonte, who marched with Bennett from Selma, Alabama during the height

of the Civil Rights era. *The Music Never Ends* includes rarely-seen footage of Bennett and Belafonte rubbing noses – film shot in 1965 by the Alabama State Sovereignty Commission, a state agency empowered to investigate “race mixing.”

Oscar-winning editor Joel Cox (*Unforgiven*) pays visual tribute to the way entertainers like Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire enriched Bennett’s creative journey. With a nod to Bennett’s career-changing 1962 Carnegie Hall concert, Cox created an ambitious montage based on “Lullaby of Broadway,” the opening number from the live concert album. The sequence features clips of Bennett performing the same song across several decades, from *The Steve Allen and Ed Sullivan* shows to the 2004 Tony Awards. An homage to Hollywood – a Busby Berkeley dance sequence from *The Gold Diggers of 1935* – adds a final flourish.

The film relies exclusively on Great American Songbook standards to illustrate stories from Bennett’s life. Duke Ellington’s “In a Mellow Tone” provides the backdrop for the defining moment of his youth – the death of his father when Bennett was 10, which forced his mother to support her three children by sewing for a penny a dress. New and old versions of “Old Devil Moon” underscore the way African-American jazz musicians imprinted Bennett’s style from the start.

Bennett learned to put on the best show possible from an uncle in vaudeville, a work ethic he’s honored throughout his career. A variety of classic clips in *The Music Never Ends* illustrate his diversity and flexibility: performing “I Left My Heart in San Francisco” with Judy Garland in 1963, recording “Everybody Has the Blues” with Ray Charles in 1986, singing the national anthem at the 1998 World Series, and spoofing his own image in a 2006 *Saturday Night Live* skit with Alec Baldwin.

From one decade to the next, Bennett has confronted changing tastes, ultimately triumphing by doing what he does best: sing. In 1979, without a manager or a record label and on the verge of bankruptcy, he turned to his son, Danny, for guidance. Danny Bennett, who

appears in the film, began managing his father's career and helped reinvent him for the MTV generation.

"To quote Duke Ellington, there's only two kinds of music – there's only good and bad – and if he loved a musician he said they were beyond category," says jazz pianist Bill Charlap in *The Music Never Ends*. "Tony Bennett is beyond category."

Red Envelope Entertainment presents a Rhapsody Films Inc. production in association with RPM Music Productions Inc. and Thirteen/NET New York. *AMERICAN MASTERS Tony Bennett: The Music Never Ends* is directed by Bruce Ricker; produced by Clint Eastwood and Ricker, in association with RPM Productions and Thirteen/WNET New York's *AMERICAN MASTERS*; written by Nick Tosches and Ricker; edited by Joel Cox; and executive produced by Ted Sarandos. Susan Lacy is creator and executive producer of *AMERICAN MASTERS*.

To take *AMERICAN MASTERS* beyond the television broadcast and further explore the themes, stories, and personalities of masters past and present, the companion Web site ([www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters)), created by Thirteen/WNET New York, offers interviews, essays, photographs, outtakes, and other resources.

*AMERICAN MASTERS* is produced for PBS by Thirteen/WNET New York. This acclaimed series, now celebrating its 21st season, has become a cultural legacy in its own right. The *AMERICAN MASTERS* film library is one of the most highly honored in television history with profiles of more than 140 artistic giants. In addition to eight Peabodys, an Oscar, a duPont-Columbia and two Grammys, *AMERICAN MASTERS* has won 17 Emmys, including Outstanding Primetime Non-Fiction Series for 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, and 2004.

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Foundation, and public television viewers. More information about **AMERICAN MASTERS** can be found at: [www.thirteen.org](http://www.thirteen.org).

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