

Black History Month on BET

Written by Staff

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This Black History Month, BET and CENTRIC will showcase the range, richness and diversity of the African-American experience with an exciting lineup of programming highlighting the cultural contributions of black America.

BET's Black History Month lineup will encompass an array of culturally dynamic films, original series and specials including: the fifth annual BET HONORS; the Network movie premiere of *The Express* (Rob Brown, Charles Dutton), *Dreamgirls* (Jamie Foxx, Beyonce, Jennifer Hudson), *Ali* (Will Smith), *John Q* (Denzel Washington, Kimberly Elise) and *35 & Ticking* (Nicole Ari Parker, Kevin Hart); and the BET News special *SOUL MATES: DR. MAYA ANGELOU AND COMMON*.

Additionally, BET will premiere brand-new episodes of hit series *THE GAME* and *LET'S STAY TOGETHER* as well as its first Oscar special, *BET TAKES HOLLYWOOD*.

On CENTRIC—BET's adult-focused channel—programming will include: *BE INSPIRED: THE LIFE OF HEAVY D*, a documentary chronicling the life of Dwight "Heavy D" Myers; *HIP HOP: A CULTURE ODYSSEY*, a documentary tracing the origins, evolution and spirit of hip hop; the Network movie premiere of *Soul Power* (James Brown) and *Having Our Say: The Delaney Sisters* (Diahann Carroll, Ruby Dee); and, concert specials from award-winning musicians R. Kelly and Mary J. Blige.

Specials:

SOUL MATES: DR. MAYA ANGELOU AND COMMON – Premieres Sunday, February 12 at 11:00 a.m.* on BET. BET News brings together the iconic master of literature Dr. Maya Angelou, who received the country's highest civilian honor from President Obama, with celebrated hip hop artist Common. The result is exclusive access to one of the most accomplished African-American figures of our time relayed by one of today's most popular artists—an unforgettable TV moment.

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BET HONORS – Premieres Monday, February 13 at 9:00 p.m.* on BET. Hosted by actress Gabrielle Union, this year's show recognizes the accomplishments of outstanding African-Americans by honoring renowned author/poet Maya Angelou (Literary Arts), internationally acclaimed musician Stevie Wonder (Musical Arts), Grammy Award-winning songstress Mariah Carey (Entertainer), influential filmmaker Spike Lee (Media), the heroic Tuskegee Airmen (Service) and inspirational coach/mentor Beverly Kearney (Education).

The show's star-studded lineup includes performances by Aretha Franklin, Patti LaBelle, Jennifer Hudson, Kelly Rowland, Queen Latifah, Willow Smith, Jill Scott, Ledisi, Cicely Tyson, Raekwon, Common, and BET Music Matters artist Luke James with appearances and participation by First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama, Cuba Gooding Jr., Terrence Howard, Willow Smith, Jill Scott, India.Arie and John Singleton.

BET TAKES HOLLYWOOD – Premieres Friday, February 17 at 10:00 p.m.* on BET. BET's first Oscar special will take a look at this year's nominees Viola Davis and Octavia Spencer (The Help). Veteran celebrity journalist Shaun Robinson of "Access Hollywood" sits down with each of the major African-American nominees of 2012 to discuss their amazing race to the Academy Awards.

Series:

THE GAME – Tuesdays at 10:00 p.m.* (encores at 11:00 p.m.*) on BET. In season five, the seduction continues as infidelity, ambition, secrets and betrayal collide to make it the most compelling yet. Picking up where it left off, Melanie (Tia Mowry Hardrick) contends with Derwin's (Pooch Hall) abortion accusation; Malik (Hosea Chanchez) and Tasha (Wendy Raquel Robinson) struggle to wrangle an intoxicated Jenna (Tika Sumpter); and Kelly (Brittany Daniel) is still off in the world trying to find herself, leaving Jason (Coby Bell) forced to come to terms with his feelings towards black women. This month's guest stars include: Brandy, Barry T. Floyd, Janet Varnay, Michael Beach, Charles Michael Davis, PJ Byrne, Star Jones, Reggie Austin, Carl Anthony Payne, Gabrielle Dennis and Isley Anderson.

LET'S STAY TOGETHER – Tuesdays at 10:30 p.m.* (encores at 11:30 p.m.*) on BET. In season two, Tasha (Joyful Drake) and Jamal (RonReaco Lee) will have their marriage tested by former relationships and other temptations while Charles and Stacy continue to explore the ups

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and downs of making coupledom work. Also in store this season, life becomes even more complex when Kita (Erica Hubbard) is inspired to go on a reality show a la Survivor and asks her cousin Crystal (Kyla Pratt) to house sit in her absence. This month's guest stars include: Jackee Harry, Christian Keyes and Justin "Irocc" Williams.

Movies:

THE EXPRESS – Premieres Saturday, February 4 at 7:30 p.m.* on BET. Rob Brown stars in the true story of Ernie Davis, the first African-American to win football's Heisman Trophy. Dubbed the "Elmira Express" for his relentless drive, Davis also lived up to the nickname off the field as he battled for racial equality. Dennis Quaid co-stars as Syracuse coach Ben Schwartzwalder, who teaches Davis the game and in return learns much from his running back's bold civil rights achievements.

HAVING OUR SAY: THE DELANEY SISTERS – Premieres Sunday, February 5 at 9:00 p.m.* on CENTRIC. Based on the New York Times' bestseller of the same name, *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years* is a celebratory look at the lives of two African-American sisters, Sadie (Diahann Carroll) and Bessie Delany (Ruby Dee), from North Carolina, who each lived over a century. Having encountered firsthand discrimination based on their race and sex, the two sisters recall their support for each other and the various societal changes during their lifetimes.

35 & TICKING – Premieres Saturday, February 11 at 8:00 p.m.* on BET. The film centers around the lives of Victoria (Tamala Jones), Zenobia (Nicole Ari Parker), Clewon (Kevin Hart), and Phil (Keith Robinson)—all friends approaching the age of 35 and struggling to build the families they've always dreamed of. All four of them try to rectify their romantic lives and futures while their biological clocks tick away. Also starring Darius McCrary, Meagan Good, Dondre Whitfield, Jill Marie Jones, Clifton Powell, Wendy Raquel Robinson, Luenell, Mike Epps and Kym Whitley.

LAVELL CRAWFORD: CAN A BROTHER GET SOME LOVE – Premieres Saturday, February 11 at 1:00 a.m.* on BET. "Last Comic Standing" runner-up Lavell Crawford lords over a hometown crowd at St. Louis's Orpheum Theatre, raking in the love—and the laughs. Jokes cover the hilarity of presidential politics and the social scene in heaven.

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DREAMGIRLS – Premieres Monday, February 13 at 6:00 p.m.* on BET. Broadway's definitive girl-group musical about three women who have high hopes for fame but end up paying a price for it makes its way to the big screen with Bill Condon at the helm and a dream cast that includes Jamie Foxx and Beyonce Knowles. Eddie Murphy co-stars in an Oscar-nominated role, but Jennifer Hudson took home the golden statuette for playing the strong but slighted Effie. The film was nominated for eight Oscars overall in 2007.

SOUL POWER – Premieres Sunday, February 19 at 9:00 p.m.* on CENTRIC. This legendary music festival (dubbed Zaire '74) depicts the experiences and performances of such musical luminaries as James Brown, BB King, Bill Withers, Celia Cruz, among a host of others. At the peak of their talents and the height of their careers, these artists were inspired by this return to their African roots, as well as the enthusiasm of the Zairian audience, to give the performances of their lives. The concert has achieved mythological significance as the definitive Africa(n)-American musical event of the 20th century.

ALI – Premieres Friday, February 24 at 8:00 p.m.* on BET. Michael Mann's Oscar-nominated drama centers on the personal and professional life of boxing legend Muhammad Ali (Will Smith), but brings with it an examination of the social and political issues of the decades in which Ali—amid great controversy—ruled the ring. From the early 1960s, through his anti-Vietnam War stance, to his epic title bouts with Liston, Frazier and Foreman, Ali proved that he is, indeed, The Greatest. Also starring Jamie Foxx, Jon Voight, Jada Pinkett Smith and Mario Van Peebles.

JOHN Q – Premieres Saturday, February 25 at 8:00 p.m.* on BET. In director Nick Cassavetes's gripping social drama, blue-collar worker John Q. (Denzel Washington) finds that his meager insurance won't cover his son's heart transplant, so he holds a hospital emergency room hostage until doctors agree to perform the surgery. Meanwhile, gung ho police chief Gus Monroe (Ray Liotta) and hostage negotiator Frank Grimes (Robert Duvall) try to diffuse the situation amid a media frenzy.

Music Specials:

R. KELLY'S LOVE LETTER CONCERT – Premieres Saturday, February 11 at 10:00 p.m.* on CENTRIC. The Love Letter Concert is your front row ticket to R. Kelly's 2011 U.S. tour named for his Grammy-nominated album Love Letter. Filmed live in Raleigh, NC and Columbus, OH, R. Kelly never disappoints, delivering hit after hit, from a hopping rendition of "Ignition (Remix)"

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to his show-stopping performance of "When A Woman Loves." The Love Letter Tour has something for everyone—longtime fans and casual listeners alike—and as R. Kelly moves effortlessly through his catalogue, he reminds us of his impact on music over the last two decades.

BEING: MARY J. BLIGE – Premieres Saturday, February 18 at 10:00 p.m.* on CENTRIC. An all-new interview with the "Queen of Hip Hop Soul," Mary J. Blige, in the CENTRIC original music-bio series "Being" followed by the one-hour premiere of her sold-out concert in Atlanta.

BE INSPIRED: THE LIFE OF HEAVY D – Premieres Sunday, February 26 at 11:00 p.m.* on CENTRIC. This one-hour documentary chronicles the prolific life and career of Dwight "Heavy D" Myers. Family members as well as artists such as Will Smith, Mary J. Blige, Eddie F., Queen Latifah and many others will reflect upon Heavy's life through his most popular songs, music videos, and his television, stage and film performances. Heavy's final tweet was "Be Inspired," a poignant phrase for the man who lived his life inspiring so many people.

HIP HOP: A CULTURAL ODYSSEY – Premieres Sunday, February 26 at 12:00 a.m.* on CENTRIC. This one-hour documentary, based on the recently released Hip Hop: A Cultural Odyssey book, traces the origins, evolution, and spirit of hip hop and the prolific artists that changed the music industry forever. In a round table discussion, hip hop aficionados will be given a chance to see industry pioneers such as Doug E. Fresh, DJ Hollywood and Big Daddy Kane reminisce and reflect about what hip-hop was back in the day, the road blocks they faced and how they feel about where hip hop is today—while Dr. Cornell West and Reverend Al Sharpton reflect on how hip hop served as a sounding board for activism and rhetoric on both political and historical benchmarks throughout time.

The Black History Month celebration continues on BET Networks' digital platforms. Viewers can log on to BET.com and CentricTV.com to find out the top black films of all time chosen by a select group of celebrities, photo flipbooks, and a video tribute to TLC's debut album 20 years after its release featuring exclusive interviews. We'll also explore the top 20 jazz greats you need to know and the history of African-Americans and the Oscars.