

# National Geographic Releases Photo From GENIUS: Aretha In Honor Of Her Birthday



Today would have been Aretha Franklin's 78th birthday and to honor her National Geographic released a photo from the upcoming GENIUS: Aretha. Cynthia Erivo portrays Franklin in the upcoming global miniseries. The National Geographic Channel acknowledges Franklin's giving spirit that contributed to various charities throughout her life and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, they will make a donation to FEEDING AMERICA in her name.Â Â

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## Raphael Saadiq & Terrence Blanchard Join Genius: Aretha Franklin



Raphael Saadiq Credit: Aaron Rapoport

Raphael Saadiq and Terrence Blanchard have joined National Geographic's GENIUS: ARETHA. Saadiq has signed on as executive producer and he will be responsible for producing, recording and arranging the music. Blanchard is slated to write and produce the score.

The first-ever scripted series on Aretha Franklin will air

Monday, May, 25th 2020 at 9 PM CT. The global anthology series will air over four consecutive nights and it will look at how Franklin started out as a gospel prodigy and became the Queen of Soul. The eight-part series will look at Franklin's career and her impact as an artist.

*"We're serving the Queen of Soul and we're thrilled and blessed to have deep soul brothers like Raphael Saadiq and Terence Blanchard on our team," said Suzan-Lori Parks, showrunner and executive producer. "They're both accomplished musicians with diverse backgrounds – both who have broken down barriers with the power of music."*

Saadiq's R&B legend goes back to the '80s when he started out with Tony! Toni! Tone! and most recently released his Jimmy Lee solo album last year and created a musical score for the HBO TV show *Insecure*. He also received a Academy Award nomination for his songwriting collaboration with Mary J. Blige for the movie *Mudbound*. Blanchard has been scoring films for decades most famously for Spike Lee and the multi-Grammy winner has contemporary credits for his work on *Black KKKlansman* and *Harriet*. Blanchard had this to say about his involvement:

*"I'm so humbled to be a part of a project that honors someone I've idolized and had the great privilege of working with. Aretha was one of a kind talent that transcended all musical genres. She is the gold standard."*

Legendary record producer Clive Davis, who produced many hits for Franklin, is an executive producer along with Atlantic Records CEO and Chairman Craig Kallman. The previously announced cast includes Cynthia Erivo as Franklin, Pauletta Washington, Courtney B. Vance, David Cross, Patrice Covington, Marque Richardson, Steven Norfleet, Omar J. Dorsey, Malcolm Barrett, Kimberley H bert Gregory and Rebecca Naomi Jones.



Terence Blanchard Credit: National Geographic