

Raphael Saadiq & Terence Blanchard Join Genius: Aretha Franklin



Raphael Saadiq Credit: Aaron Rapoport

Raphael Saadiq and Terence 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:

Â

"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 HÃ©bert Gregory and Rebecca Naomi Jones.Â



Terence Blanchard Credit: National Geographic

Raphael Saadiq Creates Mood With NPR Tiny Desk Concert

[youtube id="_KKjBeAfdPg"]Raphael Saadiq returns to NPR Tiny Desk concert series with a show that took place at night was streamed live on social media. His first performance was back in 2009 when the idea of a concert behind the small desk was new. For this show, Saadiq is joined by Lucky Daye and his band and they perform a six-song set. Saadiq's fifth solo album, *Jimmy Lee*, came out this past summer after an eight-year break.Â

Raphael Saadiq's So Ready Comes To Life In Front Of The Camera

[youtube id="0cK5JLyPLM0"]Raphael Saadiq's video for "So Ready" is another look at the addiction endured by his late brother. A beautiful day with a loved one, seeing neighborhood faces and a semblance of peace comes to a quick end. The camera sees the world through his brother's eyes and the feelings of euphoria from the drugs produces a fake reality. Saadiq's *Jimmy Lee* is out now and he is currently [touring](#) the United States.Â

Raphael Saadiq Reveals Jimmy Lee The Documentary

[youtube id="MSqTlB0c_-0"]Raphael Saadiq talks about his newest album in the Jimmy Lee documentary. The filming took place in New Orleans during the weekend of the Essence Music Festival. Saadiq explains how his older brother Jimmy Lee inspired the album named after him. His sibling's struggles with addiction and the stories of other family members are blended into the album. He also goes back to the beginning of his career to share how music became his profession.Â