



The Bullock Texas State History Museum has added an 'Austin City Limits' gallery, featuring original artifacts and a video of more than 20 performance clips by iconic musicians who have performed on ACL, the longest-running music program in American television history.

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Experience 'Austin City Limits' and its history inside the Bullock Museum

New gallery of original artifacts and curated video celebrate the longest-running music program in American television history

JANUARY 26, 2016 (AUSTIN, TX) — The Bullock Texas State History Museum has opened a new gallery space on its third floor celebrating the longest-running music program in American television history — "Austin City Limits." Produced in partnership with ACL, the new [ACL Theater Gallery](#) features original artifacts from the ACL television set and a 25-minute large-screen experience that starts with the 1974 TV pilot featuring Texas native and music icon Willie Nelson.

An original production of Austin's PBS station KLRU (formerly KLRN), "Austin City Limits" is a weekly, live-music performance television show that features a diverse array of regional, national, and international performers. The program inspired the creation of the Austin City Limits Music Festival in 2002, earned a Presidential Medal of Arts award in 2003, and was designated as an official Rock and Roll Landmark in 2010 by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum.

"We first met with ACL and KLRU teams about showcasing the ACL experience in our galleries a year ago," Bullock Museum Director Dr. Victoria Ramirez said. "Overall it was an amazing experience to work with such a talented and dedicated group of people to tell this international success story that originates in Austin. Our goal was to create an experiential concert environment featuring the music and musicians that made the innovative PBS series so popular."

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In the ACL theater, visitors can watch some of their favorite performers on screen, learn the history of ACL and see original artifacts, such as the 1980 neon sign used in the opening sequence for the program's fourth season, the tree branch from the iconic 1970s ACL Studio 6A set, and the 2011 Peabody Award that recognized ACL's role in "presenting and preserving eclectic American musical genres." [Learn more](#) about the artifacts.

To produce the 25-minute video, ACL staff, in partnership with the Bullock Museum, combed an extensive archives of programming dating back to 1974. The final video is comprised of more than 20 performance clips featuring Lyle Lovett, Loretta Lynn, Jimmy Buffet, Leonard Cohen, Flaco Jiménez, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Sheryl Crow, and Radiohead, among others.

This collaboration between the Bullock Museum and KLRU involved months of research, a review of digital archives and re-mastering of footage for digital projection. With close-up shots of musicians performing live, many familiar songs resonate with visitors. The passion, excitement and skill of the performers is larger than life on this virtual stage.

"The film footage is fantastic," Ramirez said. "You feel the emotion of the music and the emotion that runs through the studio audience. The intimate theater combines the best of watching 'Austin City Limits' from your living room and visiting the studio downtown. In addition, the Museum wanted to introduce new visitors of all ages to a contemporary Texas-based experience that grew to have an international reputation for excellence."

Since the taping of its pilot episode on Oct. 14, 1974, "Austin City Limits" has become the longest-running music program in American television history. Following a call from PBS for original programming from member stations, Austin's KLRU (then KLRN) program director Bill Arhos, producer Paul Bosner, and director Bruce Scafe came up with an idea for a program that would showcase Austin's diverse mix of country, blues, folk and psychedelia music.

The series has featured regional, national, and international acts performing a wide range of musical styles, hosting everyone from Willie Nelson to B.B. King to the Foo Fighters. More than 40 years later, "Austin City Limits" has become a music icon and has helped build Austin's reputation as the "Live Music Capital of the World."

"We are so appreciative of the generosity of ACL to lend artifacts and their expertise to this exciting new installation. Partnerships such as this allow the Bullock Museum to showcase original artifacts and share the history of ACL from the perspective of the people who created it," Ramirez said.

The gallery is located on the third floor of the Bullock Museum in downtown Austin. The museum is open to the public daily, except for select holidays. More information and tickets may be found online at TheStoryofTexas.com.

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About the Bullock Museum

The Bullock Texas State History Museum, located at 1800 N. Congress Ave. in downtown Austin, includes three floors of galleries, IMAX® and 4D special-effects theaters, a café and museum store. The Museum collaborates with more than 700 museums, libraries, archives, and individuals to display original historical artifacts and host exhibitions that illuminate and celebrate Texas history and culture. For more, visit TheStoryofTexas.com or call (512) 936-8746.