

DON WAS

Music has always loomed large in the life of Don Was. Born in Detroit in 1952, he has enjoyed a multi-faceted career as a musician, record producer, music director, film composer, documentary filmmaker and radio host. Since 2011, he has also served as President of America's venerated jazz label, Blue Note Records.

For his work as a record producer, he has won six Grammy Awards – including Album of the Year in 1989 for Bonnie Raitt's *Nick of Time* and Producer of the Year in 1994. In 1995 he produced and directed a documentary about the life of Brian Wilson, *I Just Wasn't Made For These Times*, that won the San Francisco Film Festival's Golden Gate Award. As a film composer, he won the 1994 British Academy Award (BAFTA) for Best Original Score in recognition of his work on the film *Backbeat*. He won the 2014 Emmy Award for Outstanding Music Direction for his work on the CBS TV special *The Beatles: The Night That Changed America*.

Records that he has produced have sold close to 100 million albums for a wide range of artists like:

The Rolling Stones

Voodoo Lounge 1994 (won Grammy Award for Best Rock Album 1994)

Stripped 1995

Bridges to Babylon 1997

Forty Licks (greatest hits compilation with 2 new songs)

Live Licks

A Bigger Bang 2005

Blue and Lonesome 2016 (won Grammy Award for Best Traditional Blues Album)

Bonnie Raitt

Nick of Time 1989 (winner of 5 Grammy Awards including Album of The Year.

Chosen in 2022 by the Library of Congress for the US National Recording Registry)

Luck of the Draw 1991 (winner of 3 Grammy Awards)

Longing In Their Hearts 1993

Road Tested 1995

Bob Dylan

Under The Red Sky 1989

Willie Nelson

Across the Borderline 1995

Countryman 2005

John Mayer

Born and Raised 2012

Paradise Valley 2013

Sob Rock 2021

Ringo Starr

Time Takes Time 1996

Kris Kristofferson

Moment of Forever 1995

This Old Road 2006

Closer to the Bone 2008

Feeling Mortal 2013

Van Morrison

Duets: Reworking the Catalogue 2015

Wayne Shorter

Emanon (won Grammy Award for Best Jazz Instrumental album 2018)

Iggy Pop

Brick By Brick 1990

Avenue B 1999

Neil Diamond

Melody Road 2013

Acoustic Christmas 2016

Gregg Allman

Southern Blood 2017

Ziggy Marley

Spirit of Music 1999

Family Time 2009 (won Grammy Award for Best Musical Album for Children)

Wild and Free 2011

The B52s

Cosmic Thing 1989 (including the global hit *Love Shack*)

Good Stuff 1992

Carly Simon

Spoiled Girl 1985

Bob Seger

The Fire Inside 1991

Paul Young

The Crossing 1993

Hootie and the Blowfish

Hootie & the Blowfish 2003

Waylon Jennings

Waymore's Blues 1994

The Highwaymen

The Road Goes on Forever 1995

Brian Wilson

I Just Wasn't Made for These Times 1995

Travis Tritt

The Restless Kind 1996

Joe Cocker

Organic 1996

Richie Sambora
Undiscovered Soul 1998

Paul Westerberg
Suicaine Gratification 1999

Garth Brooks
Garth Brooks in ... The Life of Chris Gaines 1999

Barenaked Ladies
Maroon 2000

The Black Crowes
Lions 2001

Solomon Burke
Make Do With What You Got 2005

Jessi Coulter
Out of the Ashes 2006

Amos Lee
Last Day at the Lodge 2008

Old Crow Medicine Show
Tennessee Pusher 2008

Stone Temple Pilots
Stone Temple Pilots 2010

Lucinda Williams
Blessed 2011

Aaron Neville
My True Story 2013

Martina McBride
Everlasting 2014

Bobby Hutcherson, David Sanborn, Joey DeFrancesco
Enjoy the View 2014

Jose James
Yesterday I Had The Blues 2015

Katharine McPhee
I Fall in Love Too Easily 2017

Gov't Mule
Revolution Come... Revolution Go 2017

Trisha Yearwood
Let's Be Frank 2018

Charles Lloyd & the Marvels and Lucinda Williams
Vanished Gardens 2018

Ryan Adams
Wednesdays 2020
Big Colors 2021

Bobby Weir and The Wolf Bros
Live in Colorado Vols 1&2 2022

He has also produced songs for **Michael McDonald, Elton John, Michelle Shocked, Glenn Frey, Roy Orbison, Delbert McClinton, David Crosby, Jackson Browne, Alison Krauss, Lyle Lovett, Marianne Faithfull, The Knack, Stevie Nicks, Paula Abdul, Bette Midler and Mitch Ryder among others.**

Don has produced albums for many international artists:-

Cheb Khaled (Algeria)

Khaled 1991 (featuring the global hit *Didi*)

Sahra 1996

N'Ssi N'Ssi 1993

Ya-Rayi 2004

Ofra Haza (Israel)

Kirya 1992

Jaguares (Mexico)

El Equilibrio de los Jaguares 1996

The Chieftains (Ireland)

The Wide World Over 2002

Johnny Hallyday (France)

Rester Vivant 2014

Zucchero (Italy)

Fly 2006

All The Best 2015

Chocabeck 2010

La Sesion Cubana 2012

Black Cat 2016

The DOC 2018

Intocable (Mexican/American)

Percepcion 2019 (won Grammy Award for Best Regional Mexican Music Album)

As a featured recording artist, he has released 6 albums:

Was (Not Was)

Was (Not Was) 1981

Born to Laugh at Tornadoes 1983

What Up Dog? 1988.

Are You Okay? 1991 (Grammy Nominated Best R&B Single)

Boo! 2008

Orquestra Was

Forever Is a Long Long Time (1996)

He has served as Music Supervisor/Consultant/Soundtrack Producer on several motion pictures including ***Thelma and Louise, The Rainmaker, Hope Floats, Phenomenon, Tin***

Cup, Honeymoon in Vegas, 8 Seconds, Switch, The Freshman, Days of Thunder, Boys on the Side, and Toy Story.

He has served as Music Director for:

The 72ND Academy Awards Telecast (co-music director with Burt Bacharach) CBS 2000
President and Michelle Obama's A Salute to the Troops: in Performance at The White House CBS 2014

The Beatles: The Night that Changed America 2014 (won Emmy Award for Outstanding Music Direction)

Willie Nelson: The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize PBS 2015

Willie Nelson: The Big 6-0 PBS 1993

Kennedy Center Honors CBS

Bob Dylan 1997

Willie Nelson 1998

Chuck Berry 1999

Elvis: The Tribute-One Night with You ABC 1995

Elvis All Star Tribute NBC 2019

Roy Orbison Tribute HBO 1990

MusicCares Person of the Year Awards

Neil Diamond 2009

Neil Young 2010

Bob Dylan 2015

1993 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

Blackbird Productions Tribute Concerts/Broadcasts saluting:

Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Kenny Rogers, Mavis Staples, Jerry Garcia, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Kris Kristofferson, Emmy Lou Harris, Levon Helm, and Merle Haggard

Don's deep Detroit roots keep him anchored to the city where, where for the last 15 years he has music directed and played bass in the ***Don Was Detroit All Star Revue*** concerts which are part of Detroit's annual diversity festival, ***The Concert of Colors***. This free concert showcases musical talent from Detroit. From 2009-2012 Don hosted a weekly Sirius XM radio show on the Outlaw Country channel called ***The Motor City Hayride***. Since 2021, he co-hosts a weekly, live radio show on Detroit's NPR station, WDET-FM called ***The Don Was Motor City Playlist***. Don is also the voice of ***Neville the Dog*** in the hit Amazon Prime Video children's show, ***Pete the Cat***.

In 2011 Was became ***President*** of the iconic jazz label ***Blue Note Records***. He fiercely protects the company's eighty-three-year-old legacy, meticulously caretaking the revered catalog of ***Black American Music***. This includes maintaining the availability and quality of vinyl reissues in the ***Tone Poet*** and ***Classic Jazz*** audiophile release series. He also signs and produces many of the label's recent roster of artists including, ***Robert Glasper, Charles Lloyd, Wayne Shorter, Dr Lonnie Smith, Gregory Porter and Jason Moran***.

In 2018 Don was invited to join Grateful Dead guitarist **Bob Weir** and drummer **Jay Lane** to form the **Wolf Brothers**. They have toured the US consistently since with Don playing double bass. In 2023 they performed some special shows at The Kennedy Center in Washington DC with the National Symphony Orchestra, as well as toured the USA with an expanded 10 piece band **Bobby Weir with the Wolf Brothers and the Wolf Pack**.

As a child of the 1950's and 60s, Was understands the integral relationship between art and activism. He currently serves on the **Universal Music Group's Task Force for Meaningful Change**. He has volunteered time and funds to the **Equal Justice Initiative, National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement and NARAS' MusicCares Foundation**. He spearheaded the **Detroit Jazz City** compilation album on Blue Note, the proceeds of which are intended for the Motor City's **Focus: HOPE** foundation to fight racism and provide education and training to minorities. His band, **Bobby Weir and the Wolf Brothers**, has regularly performed benefit concerts for such organizations as **Headcount, Reverb, Oregon Adaptive Sports, California State Parks Organization, Furthur Foundation, Coltrane Home Foundation, Backline Care and the UCSF Children's Hospital for Cancer Research**. He has worked with **Universal Music Group's Public Policy & Government** team in support of their **Alliance for Criminal Justice reform day in the US Senate, The Californians for Arts and Music Education in Public Schools ballot measure, The Shattered Venue Operator's Grant and** in opposition to **CA AB1385**.

Having just turned 70, Was is busier than ever fueled always by his prodigious love of music. Married to Gemma Corfield, former Virgin Records VP of A&R, for 35 years they have three sons, Tony, Henry and Sol all of whom are working writers, musicians and producers.