

# TRIBUTE TO A BLUE LADY

LIFE & MUSIC OF BILLIE HOLIDAY

By Carole Alston

Carole is well aware of the legacy her predecessor have left behind She takes pride in a minute share of this heritage, fully aware of the fact that it had not been for Bessie Smith, Alberta Hunter, Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Lena Horn, Ethel Waters and so many, many others (who paved the way for female jazz vocalists - present and future) there would be much less appreciation for the genre. Carole: "For them it was a daily struggle and I as all African-American female singers/performers have received a great gift: we can enjoy the fruits of their labors and successes without having to endure the intensity of denial induced by the ignorance of society which they had endured in extent"

Why Billie Holiday? Billie (1915 – 1959) was a complete person, a multi-faced character who lived out and experienced every stage possible in a human lifetime, all crammed into 44 years of roller coaster highs and lows, 44 years of living in constant contradiction. The lives of her contemporaries were, in a sense "normal", if not to say boring, in comparison. She gave the people something to talk about. There was so much more to Billie Holiday - or as she is reverently remembered "Lady Day" - than just the voice, the drugs and the scandals. She would have been a perfect case for the psychoanalyst cliché. Her childhood was so disastrous, her make-up so complex, it was clear that she was in a constant state of attempting to overcome and conquer the hardships, setbacks and injustices which befell her. She was always in a defensive position but never put the blame on on anyone else.



Tribute To A Blue Lady as a theatre piece is a compilation of 8 monologues, each supported and complemented by songs of Billie's repertoire. Also the subtitles refer to famous songs relevant to the text of the piece.

Summary:

I. Eleonora to Billie

Songs: Travelin' All Alone  
Them There Eyes

II. Harlem

Songs: Getting Some Fun Out of Life  
What A Little Moonlight

III. The "Little Black Bag Syndrome"

Song: I Wished on the Moon

IV. Sadie and Me

Song: God Bless the Child

V. On Racism

Song: T'aint Nobody's Business If I Do

VI. Looking for Love

Songs: Fine and Mellow  
All of Me  
Lover Man, Oh Where Can You Be?

VII. On Dope

Song: Good Morning, Heartache

VIII. Decline of a Blue Lady

Songs: Please Don't Talk About Me  
Strange Fruit