

# LADY DAY *at* Emerson's BAR and GRILL

STUDY GUIDE



SYRACUSE  
stage  
50<sup>th</sup>

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PRESENTS

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BY

Lanie Robertson

MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS BY

Danny Holgate

DIRECTED BY

Jade King Carroll

MUSIC DIRECTION BY

Gary Mitchell, Jr.

COSTUME AND WIG DESIGNER	LIGHTING DESIGNER	SOUND DESIGNER
Karen Perry	Mary Louise Geiger	Jacqueline R. Herter

STAGE MANAGER	CASTING
Laura Jane Collins*	Bass/Valle Casting

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*Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill* was first produced in New York by the Vineyard Theatre.

October 18 - November 5, 2023

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# NYS LEARNING STANDARDS FOR THE ARTS – THEATER

## 5th TH:Re8.1.5

a. Connect personal experiences to theater as a participant or observer

## 6th TH:Re7.1.6

a. Describe and record personal reactions to artistic choices.

## 7th TH:Re7.1.7

a. Compare recorded personal and peer reactions to artistic choices.

## 8th TH:Re9.1.8

b. Articulate the aesthetics of technical elements in a drama or theater work.

## HS Proficient TH:Re9.1.HSI

b. Critique the aesthetics of technical elements in a drama or theater work.

## HS Advanced TH:Re9.1.HSIII

c. Debate the connection between a drama or theater work and contemporary issues that may affect audiences.

# EDUCATION LETTER

Dear Educators,

The best way of learning is learning while you're having fun. Theatre provides the opportunity for us to connect with more than just our own story, it allows us to find ourselves in other people's lives and grow beyond our own boundaries. While times are different, we are still excited to share with you new theatrical pieces through live and/or pre-recorded means. We're the only species on the planet who make stories. It is the stories that we leave behind that define us. Giving students the power to watch stories and create their own is part of our lasting impact on the world. And the stories we choose to hear and learn from now are even more vital. Stories bring us together, even when we must stay apart. Stories are our connection to the world and each other. We invite you and your students to engage with the stories we tell as a starting point for you and them to create their own.

Sincerely,

Kate Laissle, and Theorri London



*Kate Laissle*  
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



*Theorri London*  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
+ EDUCATION COORDINATOR



# SYNOPSIS:

Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill is a musical focused on the life story of singer Billie Holiday. It's set in 1959 at one of her final performances at a Philadelphia bar. The play opens with Holiday's songs "I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone" and "When a Woman Loves a Man." Holiday begins her performance on a lighter note, making jokes and telling stories with her piano player Jimmy Powers. She continues joking around through "What a Little Moonlight Can Do" and then discusses how hard it is for her to sing two of her most popular songs. One is "Strange Fruit" because it's a song about lynching. "God Bless the Child" is hard for her to sing because she wrote it for her mother who passed away. She then sings "Crazy He Calls Me," another one of her biggest hits. During this song, she talks about her biggest inspirations, singers Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith. She sings a Smith song "Gimme a Pigfoot."



Holiday is reminded of the racism that both she and Smith faced in the music industry, and talks about this before singing "Baby Doll." After singing "God Bless the Child," she talks about her great-grandmother, who was enslaved, and what it was like to see her passing. She remembers being sexually assaulted when she was a young child. She remembers her father's death because of the racism of doctors. She

*Costume renderings for this production by Karen Perry*

comes back to reality when Powers plays "Foolin' Myself" for her to sing. The piano player keeps her singing with "Somebody's On My Mind" and "Easy Livin'" as she becomes more anxious. Holiday continues talking about her experiences with racism. She recalls being denied the use of a restroom in a restaurant she visited with Artie Shaw and his band. She then sings "Strange Fruit." After this dark and difficult song, she becomes very anxious, going offstage and dosing herself with heroin. She returns, in a rush, to sing "Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do." Disoriented, she continues with "Don't Explain," forgetting some lyrics in her haze, and mixing up her songs. The performance ends with "Deep Song," a haunting, sad melody, and though Billie Holiday stops singing, her music continues on, an indication of her lasting legacy. Billie Holiday is remembered in this play as a smart, funny, and passionate artist who struggled throughout her life.- *Alethea Shirilan-Howlett*



*Costume renderings for this production by Karen Perry*

## MEET THE CAST



Tracy Conyer Lee  
BILLIE HOLIDAY



Gary Mitchell, Jr.  
PIANIST



DeVaughn Jackson  
BASSIST



Nedra Snipes  
BILLIE HOLIDAY UNDERSTUDY

## MEET THE PLAYWRIGHT LANIE ROBERTSON

Lanie Robertson's first plays *The Insanity of Mary Girard* and *Back County Crimes* are frequently performed by schools and community theatres. His play about Billie Holiday, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, was produced on Broadway and in London's West End with Audra McDonald.

Many of his works are about iconic artists and the societal issues they faced: *Nasty Little Secrets* (Joe Orton), *Woman Before a Glass* (Peggy Guggenheim), *Alfred Stieglitz Loves O'Keeffe* (Georgia O'Keeffe), *Nobody Lonesome for Me* (Hank Williams), *The Gardener* (Claude Monet) and *Blythe Coward* (Noël Coward).

His works have been produced at the Alley Theatre, the Alliance Theatre, Annenberg Center, Arena Stage, Barrington Stage, the Edinburgh Festival, Festival d'Avignon, George St. Playhouse, Kennedy Center, Old Globe, Primary Stages, Playwrights Horizons, Theatre de la Huchette, Theatre Petit Montparnasse, Theatre Silvia Montfort, Vineyard Theatre, Virginia Stage, the Walnut Street Theatre, Westside Arts Theatre and Williamstown Theatre Festival.

His first novel is to be published in 2024.

He is a member of the Dramatist Guild, the Society des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques and the Writers Guild, East.

## MEET THE DIRECTOR JADE KING CARROLL



Jade King Carroll (Director) Regional: *Red Velvet* (Shakespeare Theatre Company), *Detroit '67* (McCarter Theatre co-production with Hartford Stage); *Intimate Apparel*, *The Piano Lesson* (McCarter Theatre); *The Piano Lesson* (Hartford Stage); *Having Our Say* (Hartford Stage co-production with Long Wharf Theatre); *Trouble in Mind* (Two River Theater & Playmaker's Rep); *Seven Deadly Sins - Wrath* (Miami New Drama- Drama League Award); *New Age* (Milwaukee Rep); *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *The Whipping Man*, *Native Gardens*, *Skeleton Crew*, *Bad Dates*, *Perseverance*, *How I Learned What I Learned* (Portland Stage); *The Revolutionists*,

*Sunset Baby* (City Theatre); *Still Life* (Ancram Opera House); *A Raisin in the Sun* (Perseverance); *The Tempest*, *Hamill's Pride and Prejudice* (Chautauqua Theater Company); *Seven Guitars*, *The Persians* (People's Light and Theatre); *King Hedley II* (Portland Playhouse); *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Cardboard Piano* (Juilliard); *Laughing Wild*, *Redeemed*, *Skeleton Crew* (Dorset Theatre Festival). Off-Broadway: *Hello*, *From the Children of Planet Earth* (The Playwright's Realm); *Proof of Love* (Audible at Minetta Lane/audiobook); *Autumn's Harvest* (Lincoln Center Institute); *New Golden Age* (Primary Stages-Susan Smith Blackburn nominated); *Mr. Chickee's Funny Money* (Atlantic Theater - NYT Family Pick). Broadway: Associate Director *The Gin Game*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Audio Plays: *Marvel's Waterlanders: Doom* (Marvel, Ambies Nomination for Best Production); *Proof of Love* (Audible); *Redeemed* (Broadway Podcast Network/Dorset Theatre Festival); *The Bleeding Class* (Geva Theater); *Isolated Incidents* (Broadway Podcast Network). Awards: Paul Green Award from the Estate of August Wilson, Drama League, Gates Millennium Scholar. Producing Artistic Director of Chautauqua Theater Company

## MEET COSTUME DESIGNER KAREN PERRY



Karen Perry (Costume and Wig Designer). *Destiny of Desire* (The Old Globe), *Clyde's*, *We All Fall Down: world premiere* (Huntington Theatre Co.), *Wine in the Wilderness*, *Radio Golf*, *Love In Hate Nation: world premiere*, *Oo-BlaDee*, *King Hedley II*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, *Lives of Reason*, *Seven Guitars*, *Your Blues Ain't Sweet Like Mine*, *Guadalupe in the Guest Room* (Two River Theater Co.), *A Raisin in the Sun* (The Public Theater), *Personality: The Lloyd Price Musical* (People's Light), *My Lord, What a Night* (Ford's Theatre Society), *Lackawanna Blues* (Manhattan Theatre Club), *The Garden* (La Jolla Playhouse, Baltimore Center Stage), *Mothers* (The Playwrights Realm), *runboyrun/In Old Age* (New York Theatre Workshop), *Jazz* (Marin

Theatre Co.), *Lackawanna Blues*, *Good Grief* (Center Theatre Group), *Black Super Hero Magic Mama* (The Geffen Playhouse), *Fun Home* (Baltimore Center Stage), *Steel Magnolias*, *Hair, Miller*, *Mississippi*, *Dreamgirls* (Dallas Theater Center), *Oklahoma!* (Theatre Under the Stars), *Familiar*, *The Lion in Winter* (The Guthrie Theater, Seattle Repertory Theatre), *Citizens Market*, *Wild With Happy* (City Theatre Co.), *Familiar* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre Co.), *Skeleton Crew* (Center Stage), *Sunset Baby* (TheaterWorks Hartford), *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years* (Hartford Stage, Long Wharf Theatre), *Dead and Breathing* (Dr. Barbara Ann Teer's National Black Theatre), *stop. reset.* (Goodman Theatre), *Trouble in Mind* (PlayMakers Repertory Company). Awards: 2023 Norton Award, Craig Award, 2 NAACP Awards, 2 Ovation Awards, 9 Audelco Awards, ATW's Henry Hewes Awards, and Lucille Lortel Award



## MEET SCENIC DESIGNER BRITTANY VASTA



public art installation); *The Lifespan of a Fact* (Bway, Studio 54); *Fairview* (Soho Rep). Drama Desk nomination for set design of *Octet*. M.F.A., NYU. USA 829. [brittanyvasta.com](http://brittanyvasta.com)

Brittany Vasta (Scenic Designer) is a Brooklyn-based scenic designer for live performance. Recent work includes *Octet* (Signature Theatre & Berkeley Rep); *Bill Irwin's Harlequin & Pantalone* (NY City Center); *Fucking A* (Fordham); *Cardboard Piano* (The Juilliard School); *Life Sucks* (Theatre Row); *Happy Birthday Wanda June* (The Duke); *I thought I would die but I didn't* (The Tank); *Sehnsucht* (JACK); *Gypsy* (Theatre Aspen); *Choir Boy* (Portland Center Stage); *the ripple, the wave that carried me home* (PCS); *Redwood* (PCS); *Welcome to Fear City* (Kansas City Rep); *August: Osage County* (Resident Ensemble Players UDEL); *My Name is Asher Lev* (Portland Stage Company); *Richard III* (Shakespeare Theatre of NJ). Recent Associate Design: *Chicken and Biscuits* (Bway, Circle in the Square); *The Green* (Lincoln Center

## MEET LIGHTING DESIGNER MARY LOUISE GEIGER



Opera among others. Training: Yale School of Drama, Faculty: NYU Tisch. [www.mlgeiger.com](http://www.mlgeiger.com)

Mary Louise Geiger (Lighting Designer). Syracuse Stage: *How I Learned to Drive*. Broadway: *The Constant Wife* (American Airlines Theatre). Off Broadway: *Partnership, Becomes a Woman, Conflict* (Mint Theatre); *Halfway Bitches Go Straight to Heaven, Good Television, The New York Idea* (Atlantic Theatre), *Until the Flood* (Rattlestick); *X, Or Betty Shabazz v. The Nation* (Acting Company); *Nat Turner in Jerusalem, Forever, Oedipus at Palm Springs* (New York Theatre Workshop); *Kindness, Blue Door, The Busy World is Hushed* (Playwrights Horizons); *Mabou Mines DollHouse, Red Beads* (Mabou Mines). Regional: ACT Theatre, 5th Avenue, Goodman, Huntington, Steppenwolf, Milwaukee Rep, Guthrie, Pioneer, Cleveland Playhouse, Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, Center Theatre Group, LA

# PRE SHOW ACTIVITIES

# POST SHOW ACTIVITIES

## PRE SHOW QUESTIONS

What do you know about Billie Holiday? Have you ever listened to any of her music? Scan or click the link below to listen to a playlist of Billie Holiday's music.



[This is Billie Holiday-Spotify](#)

What do you know about jazz music? Scan or click the link below to listen to a playlist of jazz music.



[Jazz and Civil Rights-Spotify](#)

What do you know about the 1950s in the United States?

## POST SHOW QUESTIONS

Did you learn anything new about Billie Holiday?

Did you learn anything new about the United States during the 1950s?



# POST SHOW REVIEW

What is the moment you will most remember from the play?

Did you believe the actors? Which ones did the best in their roles? What made them successful?

Could you find a theme in the production? What was it? How did the production show you that theme?

What did you think of the set? How did it add to the storytelling?

What did you think of the costumes? How did they add to the storytelling?

How did the lighting affect the mood of the storytelling?

Did this play have any observations about people, society, relationships, or anything else?

Would you recommend someone else to see this play? Why or why not?



# BILLIE HOLIDAY-THE VOICE OF EMOTION AND STRUGGLE



*Photo from Wikimedia Commons; Public Domain*

## Introduction

Billie Holiday is an iconic jazz singer. She is remembered for her unique voice, and for using music as a tool for social change. Her life and career were marked by challenges and triumphs. Her enduring legacy continues to influence people today.

## Early Life and Musical Beginnings

In 1915, Billie Holiday was born as Eleanora Fagan in Philadelphia. She spent most of her childhood in Baltimore, Maryland. She turned to music as an escape from a rough childhood. She developed her skills by listening to records of jazz and blues greats. After she and her mother moved to New York, she gained experience in the music scene of Harlem. This helped lay the foundation for her career.

## Rise to Stardom

Holiday made her debut in the jazz nightclubs around Harlem. Her unique voice gained the attention of important figures in music. Working with renowned musicians like Benny Goodman and Teddy Wilson put her in the spotlight.



### **Musical Innovation and Influence**

Billie Holiday's music exceeded genre boundaries. She blended elements of jazz, blues, and even pop in her music. This created a style that was uniquely her own. Her ability to convey deep emotions earned her a devoted audience.

### **Challenges and Personal Struggles**

Holiday's life was not without hardships. She faced prejudice and racism throughout her career. Her battle with drug addiction was also well-documented. Despite her personal struggles, she remained dedicated to her music. It was a way for her to express emotions and connect with audiences.

### **Legacy and Impact**

Billie Holiday's influence extends far beyond her lifetime. Her one of a kind vocal technique and emotional delivery has left a mark on the world of music. Her songs have been covered by many artists. Her impact is heard in the works of contemporary singers across various genres.

### **Social Conscience and Lasting Relevance**

"Strange Fruit" is arguably Holiday's most powerful contribution. The song's depiction of lynching in America demonstrated her willingness to confront important issues. Her commitment to social justice through her music continues to inspire artists who push for change.



*Photo(s) from Wikimedia Commons; Public Domain*

### **Conclusion**

Billie Holiday's legacy reveals an artist who was also symbol of strength. Her music transcended boundaries. It connected with the human experience in profound ways. Through her struggles and triumphs, she remains a testament to the power of art.



LEARN MORE ABOUT BILLIE HOLIDAY BY SCANNING OR CLICKING THE LINKS BELOW:



[PBS-American Masters-Billie Holiday](#)



[How the Government Targeted "Strange Fruit" Singer Billie Holiday with Drug Arrests-Biography.com](#)



[Billie Holiday + Strange Fruit-Smithsonian Magazine](#)

*Photo from Wikimedia Commons; Public Domain*

# BILLIE HOLIDAY: AN ICON OF STYLE



Photo from Wikimedia Commons; Public Domain

Billie Holiday is not only known as a prolific jazz singer but as an icon of style. Her style was the epitome of elegance and grace. She was often seen wearing glamorous gowns, fur coats, and beautiful jewelry. One of her most famous accessories were the white gardenias she wore in her hair. Her style opposed stereotypes about black women at the time. According to Black hair historian, author, and editor Ayana Byrd in a Vogue article, "Black women at that time in society were often not considered feminine or beautiful in the ways that white women were by mainstream America and the media

(Valenti).” Her style is also now seen as a protest against a society that sought to diminish her because of her race. She was a huge celebrity, and she dressed to reflect her status; even though, she was denied access to restrooms, hotel rooms, and restaurants due to segregation. A white FBI agent that was sent to follow her said: “She flaunted her way of living, with her fancy coats and fancy automobiles and her jewelry and her gowns. She was the big lady wherever she went (Cochrane).”The following images are examples of Billie Holiday’s iconic style.



These photos were collected as research images by costume designer, Karen Perry.



Photo from EatDrinkFilms.com

1949 Ebony Magazine Cover







Photo from Frank Diggs Collection/Archive Photos

## A JOURNEY THROUGH JAZZ: MUSIC THAT SHAPED THE WORLD

### The Birth of Jazz

Long ago, in the city of New Orleans, a new kind of music was born. It was the late 19th century, and people from all over the world came together in this bustling city. Developed in the African American community, jazz is a musical gumbo. It blends African rhythm, European instruments,

and unique creativity.

### Swing and Big Bands

As the 1920s rolled in, jazz took the world by storm. It became the music of the era. It was played at parties and

in dance halls. Big bands with many musicians became hugely popular. People were swinging and tapping their feet to the music of legends Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington.

### Bebop and Cool Jazz

After World War II, jazz took a new turn. Musicians like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie created a style

called bebop. It was like musical acrobatics – fast and tricky! At the same time, another group of musicians was experimenting with what would become “cool jazz.” Miles Davis was one of the leaders of this smooth and relaxed style. Jazz was exploring new paths!

### Jazz Legends and Improvisation

One of the coolest things about jazz is improvisation. Imagine playing a musical instrument and making up your own tunes on the spot! Legends like Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald were masters of this art. Each performance was a unique and special performance.

### Fusion and Beyond

As the years went on, jazz kept changing. Musicians started to mix jazz with other styles like rock, funk, and even electronic music. This was called fusion, and it created some exciting sounds. Artists like Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea showed that jazz could be anything you wanted it to be.

### Jazz Today and Forever

Jazz has traveled across the globe, inspiring musicians and audiences everywhere. From its roots in the streets of New Orleans to a global phenomenon, jazz has captured hearts and ears for over a century.

### Glossary:

**Jazz**-A style of music that blends different rhythms, melodies, and instruments, often with a focus on improvisation.

**Swing**-A type of jazz music that makes you want to dance, known for its catchy rhythms.

**Big Band**-A large group of musicians playing together, featuring instruments like trumpets, saxophones, and more.

**Bebop**-A complex and fast style of jazz that emerged after World War II.

**Cool Jazz**-A relaxed and smooth style of jazz, often featuring slower tempos.

**Improvisation**-Making up music on the spot, without planning ahead.

**Fusion**-Mixing jazz with other musical styles to create new sounds.





*Photo from Wikimedia Commons; Public Domain*

## JAZZ AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: A MUSICAL JOURNEY FOR EQUALITY

Jazz music played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement. Many jazz musicians used music to tell stories of hope, struggle, and change. Jazz music was often used to bring attention to the horrors of racism in the United States.

### Civil Rights Movement

The Civil Rights Movement was a mass movement for

racial equality in the United States. African Americans in the South faced segregation, prejudice, and violence every day. When travelling to perform in the South, African American jazz musicians faced widespread discrimination. They were forced to perform in segregated venues, eat in segregated restaurants, and were rejected from hotels.

### Jazz as a Voice for Change

Jazz musicians made powerful music that told stories of inequality. Their music expressed their emotions about segregation, lynching, and other horrific issues. Many of these songs became the backdrop of the Civil Rights

Movement. They were played during protests and rallies. Jazz musicians protested by not performing at segregated venues. They headlined benefit concerts for issues at the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement.



*Photo from charlesmingus.com*

## 3 Examples of Jazz Musicians Fighting for Change

### Charles Mingus

In 1957, Arkansas governor Orval E. Faubus defied the Supreme Court's desegregation order. He used National Guard troops to stop nine African American students from entering Little

Rock Central High School. The federal government had to send in troops to protect the students and chaperone them into the school. This event inspired Charles Mingus to write "Fables of Faubus." This song was filled with biting sarcasm and direct criticisms of Governor Faubus. Mingus's record label refused to release the song with lyrics, and it appeared on his album as an instrumental piece. The lyrics were later recorded with another record label and released as "Original Faubus Fables."



*Photo from Wikimedia Commons; Public Domain*

### Nina Simone

Two pivotal events inspired

Nina Simone's first civil rights song, "Mississippi Goddam." In 1963, Medgar Evers, a major civil rights activist, was murdered by the Ku Klux Klan in front of his home. Months later, an Alabama church was bombed, and four young African American girls were killed. These events deeply affected Nina Simone, and this shows in "Mississippi Goddam." The song lists the injustices faced by African Americans and criticized the government.

In 1957, nine African American students were stopped from entering Little Rock Central High School by National Guard troops in Arkansas. In protest, Armstrong cancelled his tour to the Soviet Union. In response to the incident he said: "The way they're treating my people in the South, the government can go to hell."



Photo from Wikimedia Commons; Public Domain

### Louis Armstrong

Louis Armstrong was a cultural ambassador for the US during the Cold War. He performed jazz music in countries all over the world.

# THE HISTORY OF HEROIN IN THE UNITED STATES

## Introduction

The history of heroin in the United States is a tale that involves both medical innovation and societal challenges. Made from morphine, heroin was first used as a potent painkiller. Its journey through American society has been marked by misuse, addiction, and a battle for control.

## Origins and Early Medical Use

Heroin's story begins with the discovery of morphine in the 19th century. Morphine is a powerful pain-reliever made from opium poppies. It was hailed as a miracle drug. However, it also carried a dark side. It had the potential for addiction. Seeking a less addictive alternative, chemists made heroin from morphine. The drug company Bayer sold heroin as a safer and non-addictive alternative to morphine. It was even used to treat coughs and colds.

## The Dark Turn: Heroin's Rise as a Street Drug

In the early 20th century there was a shift in the perception of heroin. The Harrison Narcotics

Tax Act of 1914 was the first law to regulate the sale and use of morphine and heroin. In 1923, the U.S. Treasury Department of Narcotics Division banned all narcotic sales. Heroin was now a street drug. A significant illegal market developed in the 1920s. This led to an increase in addiction rates and related crime. Heroin became associated with criminals. The use of heroin spread through marginalized communities.

## The 1960s and the Heroin Epidemic

The 1960s brought about a resurgence in heroin use. Some soldiers returning from the Vietnam War brought back heroin habits. The drug also found its way into impoverished neighborhoods. Major cities, especially New York, became centers of the heroin epidemic. There was an alarming rise in overdose deaths and crime rates.

## Government Response and the War on Drugs

In the 1970s, the U.S. government launched the War on Drugs. This was in response to the growing drug crisis. This

started stricter drug policies and harsher penalties for drug offenses. These efforts aimed to curb drug abuse. However, this change did not lead to a decline in addiction rates. In fact, it contributed to a new crisis: the opioid epidemic. Those addicted to prescription opioids turned to heroin when access to prescription drugs became restricted.

**Facing the Present:  
Addressing the Opioid  
Epidemic**

The United States continues to deal with the opioid epidemic. Lawmakers, healthcare professionals, and communities are working to combat addiction. Efforts are being made to expand access to addiction treatment, improve prescription monitoring, and increase public awareness about opioid misuse.

**Conclusion**

The history of heroin in the United States is a cautionary tale. It underscores the importance of understanding the impact of drugs on society. From its origins as a medicine to its shift into a

street drug, heroin's journey reflects the complex interplay of science, policy, and society.

## 2023/2024 EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH SPONSORS

Syracuse Stage is committed to providing students with rich theatre experiences that explore and examine what it is to be human. Research shows that children who participate in or are exposed to the arts show higher academic achievement, stronger self esteem, and improved ability to plan and work toward a future goal. Many students in our community have their first taste of live theatre through Syracuse Stage's outreach programs. Last season more than 21,000 students from across New York attended or participated in the Bank of America Children's Tour, artsEmerging, the Young Playwrights Festival, Backstory, Young Adult Council, and/or our Student Matinee Program. We gratefully acknowledge the corporations and foundations who support our commitment to in-depth arts education for our community.

The logo for Wegmans, featuring the brand name in a stylized, cursive script font.

# READING LIST

## *BECOMING BILLIE HOLIDAY*

Carole Boston Weatherford, Floyd Cooper (Illustrator)

Before the legend of Billie Holiday, there was a girl named Eleanora. In 1915, Sadie Fagan gave birth to a daughter she named Eleanora. The world, however, would know her as Billie Holiday, possibly the greatest jazz singer of all time. Eleanora's journey into legend took her through pain, poverty, and run-ins with the law. By the time she was fifteen, she knew she possessed something that could possibly change her life—a voice. Eleanora could sing. Her remarkable voice led her to a place in the spotlight with some of the era's hottest big bands. Billie Holiday sang as if she had lived each lyric, and in many ways she had. Through a sequence of raw and poignant poems, award-winning poet Carole Boston Weatherford chronicles Eleanora Fagan's metamorphosis into Billie Holiday. The author examines the singer's young life, her fight for survival, and the dream she pursued with passion in this Coretta Scott King Author Honor winner. With stunning art by Floyd Cooper, this book provides a revealing look at a cultural icon.-[Goodreads](#)

## *JAZZ*

Walter Dean Myers, Christopher Myers (Illustrator)

Fifteen poems, infused with the rhythm and wordplay of jazz music, are paired with bold, stylized illustrations of performers and dancers to convey the history and breadth of this unique musical style. From bebop to New Orleans, from ragtime to boogie, and every style in between, *Jazz* takes readers on a musical journey from jazz's beginnings to the present day.

Created by a celebrated father-son team, *Jazz* is a Coretta Scott King Honor Book and a Kirkus Best Children's Books Editor's Choice.-[Goodreads](#)

## *STRANGE FRUIT: BILLIE HOLIDAY AND THE POWER OF A PROTEST SONG*

Gary Golio, Charlotte Riley (Illustrator)

This picture book for older readers tells the story of how the racism protest song "Strange Fruit" came into being in 1939. This is also the story of two outsiders - Billie Holiday, a young black woman raised in poverty, and Abel Meeropol, the son of Jewish immigrants - whose combined talents created a truly unforgettable song.-[Goodreads](#)

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