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## Billie Holiday reprised on DVD, Sathima Bea Benjamin on CD, Wynton Marsalis in paperback

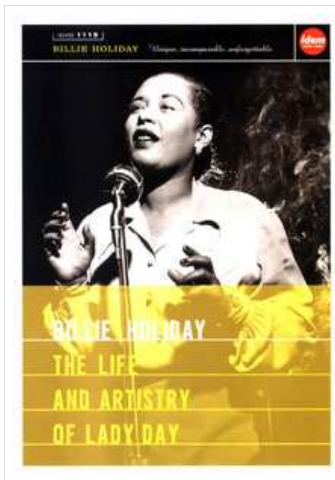
November 9, 3:56 PM • LA/OC Theatre Examiner • Jordan Young



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A legend rises to the surface in "[Billie Holiday: The Life and Artistry of Lady Day](#)," a new DVD release marking the 50th anniversary of her untimely death. A half-hour documentary, apparently made for British television, takes us from her troubled childhood to her messy adult life. Her career takes center stage, with film clips from nightclub and TV appearances; highlights include "Symphony in Black" with Duke Ellington and Holiday singing "What a Little Moonlight Can Do?" the year before her death. Additional clips from "New Orleans," a rare 1947 feature film appearance with Louis Armstrong, spotlight her singing "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans?" and "The Blues Are Brewin'." A discography, lyrics and other extras round out the package (Idem Home Video; available from MVD).



If you were lucky enough to attend one of [Esperanza Spalding](#)'s sets at OC Performing Arts Center last weekend, you caught a rising young star; her soulful rendition of "Autumn Leaves" was almost worth the price of admission. Sathima Bea Benjamin, who was inspired by Holiday early on, wasn't much older than Spalding in 1963 when she caught the ear of Ellington—who promptly had her record an album. The tapes disappeared and were thought lost until they reappeared in the '90s and were finally issued. Happily, "[A Morning in Paris](#)" is now available on CD. Benjamin's sultry tones evoke a smoky nightclub setting, long ago and far away; Ellington, Billy Strayhorn and Abdullah Ibrahim (aka Dollar Brand) back the South African vocalist on piano in this stunning debut. (Produced by Ekapa Records).

Never mind the Grammys and the Pulitzer, [Wynton Marsalis](#) isn't waiting until his twilight years to try and make a difference on this planet. In "[Moving to Higher Ground: How Jazz Can Change Your Life](#)" (written with Geoffrey C. Ward), he recalls how banjo-guitar legend Danny Barker taught him profound lessons about jazz and life as an eight-year-old he's never forgotten. Marsalis delivers in a down-to-earth manner what he calls "the positive message of America's greatest music"—how it can alter our outlook on life and enrich every aspect of it; the penultimate chapter offers his personal take on everyone from Armstrong and Ellington to Miles Davis and John Coltrane, and the lessons he learned from them. (Available from Random House in paperback).

Hot tip: "Blending Our Voices," an interfaith concert bringing Jewish, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and other faith groups together, will burst into song November 15, 7 p.m. at Temple Beth El, 2 Liberty, Aliso Viejo. Admission: a canned food offering. Call 949-362-3999 for information.

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