**Billie Holiday**

**Eleanora Fagan** (April 7, 1915 – July 17, 1959), professionally known as **Billie Holiday**, was an American [jazz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jazz" \o "Jazz)musician and [singer-songwriter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singer-songwriter) with a career spanning nearly thirty years. Nicknamed "**Lady Day**" by her friend and music partner [Lester Young](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lester_Young), Holiday had a seminal influence on jazz music and [pop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pop_music) singing. Her vocal style, strongly inspired by jazz instrumentalists, pioneered a new way of manipulating [phrasing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phrase_(music)) and [tempo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tempo). She was known for her vocal delivery and improvisational skills, which made up for her limited range and lack of formal music education. There were other jazz singers with equal talent, but Holiday had a voice that captured the attention of her audience.

After a turbulent childhood, Holiday began singing in nightclubs in [Harlem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harlem), where she was heard by the producer [John Hammond](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hammond_(producer)), who commended her voice. She signed a recording contract with [Brunswick Records](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brunswick_Records) in 1935. Collaborations with [Teddy Wilson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teddy_Wilson) yielded the hit "[What a Little Moonlight Can Do](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/What_a_Little_Moonlight_Can_Do)", which became a jazz standard. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Holiday had mainstream success on labels such as [Columbia Records](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_Records) and [Decca Records](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decca_Records). By the late 1940s, however, she was beset with legal troubles and drug abuse. After a short prison sentence, she performed a sold-out concert at [Carnegie Hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnegie_Hall), but her reputation deteriorated because of her drug and alcohol problems.