



Recital By Billie Holiday

Although the songs here are all durable old favorites—one of them, "My Man," goes back as far as the 1925 "Ziegfeld Follies" and possibly, in origin, beyond that—on this album you hear the latest-day Billie Holiday. What she means, generally, is that the singing is more, deeper, than that of an earlier Lady Day, though the phrasing is as exquisite as ever, the old timbre of voice still a blend of sensuousness and pungency.

Just as Billie herself is a singer of many moods, the selections vary widely in scope and prove conclusively that Billie Holiday is equally at home with fast tunes and ballads alike. What has always made Miss Holiday a topflight singer—and, of course, has made her the source of many other singers' styles—is her highly individual phrasing. Note, for example, how she accents the words "glittering" and "shimmering" in Vernon Duke's "Autumn in New York" and how she lends the lyric a wistful, bittersweet kind of mellowness.

In "Remember," an Irving Berlin tune dating to 1925, Billie takes a song usually interpreted in dreary—and, with its title, frequently dreary—fashion and brings it upstage without detracting a whit from the tenderness of the lyric. (Barney Kessel contributes a first-rate guitar passage to this one.) Another ballad brought upstage here is "Blue Drop in the Ocean," likewise from Irving Berlin's pen (and this one, for a dividend, offers a fine muted trumpet solo by Charlie Shavers). "What a Little Moonlight Can Do" is, of course, firmly identified with Lady Day off her solo-recorded 1955 recording with a unit headed by Benny Goodman. Here Billie is backed by a group comprising Charlie Shavers, trumpet; Oscar Peterson, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Herb Ellis, guitar; and Ed Shepherson, drums. Compositions are treated and it's quite possible that this one has the edge.

To characterize the others, on "Autumn in New York" and a bright albeit neglected tune entitled "If the Moon Turns Green," Billie is accompanied by Flip Phillips, tenor saxophone; Charlie Shavers, trumpet; Oscar Peterson, piano; Barney Kessel, guitar; Ray Brown, bass; Alvin Stoller, drums. Still another unit—Joe Newman, Charlie Shavers, saxophone; Paul Quinichio, tenor saxophone; Oscar Peterson, piano; Barney Kessel, guitar; Ray Brown, bass and J. C. Heard, drums—is in heard on "Stormy Weather," sung here with far imagination well tempered by restraint. "My Man," "He's Funny That Way," "Remember," "I Can't Face the Music," Ramsey's lilting "Lover Come Back to Me," and Emma Kent's "Yesterday" from the 1933 Broadway hit, "Roberta," are backed by the same instrumentation.

These sides offer a good indication of why Billie Holiday remains one of the foremost of all jazz singers. A past notation on Miss Holiday, by Norman Grant, expresses it well: "If the standards of good jazz be feeling, style, originality and time, then this is a great jazz, for all these qualities are served up in beguiling measure."

The Tunes Are:

IF THE MOON TURNS GREEN
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢
REMEMBER
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢
WHAT A LITTLE MOONLIGHT CAN DO
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢
MY MAN
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢
LOVER COME BACK TO ME
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢
STORMY WEATHER
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢

YESTERDAY
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢
HE'S FUNNY THAT WAY
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢
I CAN'T FACE THE MUSIC
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢
BLUE DROP IN THE OCEAN (New High in the Sky)
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢
WHAT A LITTLE MOONLIGHT CAN DO
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢
IF I COULD BE LIKE YOU
 Columbia Records, 302 50¢