



# Billie Holiday: The Musician and the Myth

*John Szwed*

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**Billie Holiday: The Musician and the Myth** John Szwed

**Published in celebration of Holiday's centenary, the first biography to focus on the singer's extraordinary musical talent**

When Billie Holiday stepped into Columbia's studios in November 1933, it marked the beginning of what is arguably the most remarkable and influential career in twentieth-century popular music. Her voice weathered countless shifts in public taste, and new reincarnations of her continue to arrive, most recently in the form of singers like Amy Winehouse and Adele.

Most of the writing on Holiday has focused on the tragic details of her life—her prostitution at the age of fourteen, her heroin addiction and alcoholism, her series of abusive relationships—or tried to correct the many fabrications of her autobiography. But now, *Billie Holiday* stays close to the music, to her performance style, and to the self she created and put into print, on record and on stage.

Drawing on a vast amount of new material that has surfaced in the last decade, critically acclaimed jazz writer John Szwed considers how her life inflected her art, her influences, her uncanny voice and rhythmic genius, a number of her signature songs, and her legacy.

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