

BELEZA

presents

**BILLIE
& ME**

Created, written and produced by Sarah Cropper
Music Direction by Terri Lyne Carrington

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Billie and Me

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For many, Billie Holiday was the definitive singer, an innovative composer, and a remarkable actress. To a few, she was also a lover and wife, a pleasure seeker and drug addict. To everyone she was – and still is – an icon, a commodity, myth and mystery.

'Billie and Me' is a fantastic celebration of the life, career and lasting influence of the woman who sang survival songs like no other. As a production, it breaks the mould because it is told only by women: artists and performers, all of whom have been influenced by Lady Day.

'Billie & Me' shines a positive light on one of the most influential figures in music and an icon of the 20th century. The Billie Holiday that these women artists celebrate is the fully human, complicated and fascinating woman that each of them has laughed and cried with...who walked the path before them and taught them the dangers of the pitfalls ahead...

Billie continues to haunt new generations of women even 47 years after her death, and she will continue to inspire generations of women to come.

And now this is their time to say thank you.



The Stage Show

'Billie and Me' is the latest in a new genre of live entertainment created by the convergence of projection and cinematic technology with innovative set design and digital surround sound.

In this magical evening performance, some of the world's most inspirational female musicians, writers and poets gather together to celebrate the spirit of Billie. Live performances, electrifying dance sequences, and reinterpretations of Lady Day's repertoire, mix seamlessly with rare film and audio archive footage and filmed contributions from women artists from around the world. The result is a fascinating tapestry of stories from women's lives, through which the life of one woman emerges fresher and truer than ever before.

The narrative leads the audience away from the 'tragic' figure of Billie found in history, and instead takes them on an astounding and magical journey to find the real Lady Day. This is a story that pays tribute to Billie's innovative and progressive musicianship and her role as the great communicator and poet who sang the story of every woman on the planet. This is a story that considers the work Billie did to raise society's consciousness of racial injustice, whilst at the same time reveals the myths surrounding her personal life, examining what can be learned from this side of her life and how it affected her music making. This is a story that shows how generations of women around the world have followed in her footsteps, and how they have run on in very different ways...

This production is no museum piece or tribute, and this is not a night only for artists who 'sound like' Billie did over 50 years ago. The cast of 'Billie and Me' pay homage in the manner that speaks for them. Classic covers of her music stand side by side with contemporary interpretations from all genres of music: blues, jazz, hip hop, afrobeat and soul.

Classic big swing numbers like **I Hear Music** and **Lover Come Back to Me** bring 1930's Harlem back to life with Cotton Club dancers filling the stage. New soulful interpretations of **God Bless the Child** and **Ain't Nobody's Business** allow the new urban generation to translate Billie's words into their own understanding. Artists from the colourful global music stage present an afro-latin extravaganza on **The Man I Love**, whilst gospel and R&B, old and new, drive the sizzling **Billie's Blues** medley. The horror of *all* crimes against humanity, through the ages, are laid bare by the gaunt rendition of the powerful anthem **Strange Fruit**, before the lushness of the **Lady in Satin** ballads are evoked by classic strings, horns and dancers as the show draws to a close.



The Story So Far

'Billie and Me': A unique event where some of the world's leading women artists, writers, poets and thinkers join together to celebrate Billie Holiday's spirit and musical genius. Hosted by singer and DJ Neneh Cherry in London, and the legendary Nancy Wilson in the USA, the musical director is Terri Lyne Carrington, one of the world's finest jazz drummers and an accomplished composer and arranger. The production is written and created by Sarah Cropper.

'Billie and Me' is an evolving work of art. Beginning as an acclaimed 6-part radio series for BBC Radio 2, its reputation grew quickly by word of mouth until it was commissioned as a sellout critically acclaimed evening performance at London's Barbican Centre in 2004. A tour of the US followed in 2005. So far the women who have taken part include:

Neneh Cherry, Nancy Wilson, Ursula Rucker, Mica Paris, Abbey Lincoln, Annie Ross, Lena Horne, Angelique Kidjo, Terri Lyne Carrington, Yolande Bavan, Dianne Reeves, Claire Martin, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Debbie Harry, Cassandra Wilson, Omara Portuondo, Susheela Raman, Nneena Freelon, Mary J Blige, Suzanne Vega, Jill Scott, Tori Amos, Bebel Gilberto, Emmylou Harris, Joan Baez, Maya Angelou, Ntozake Shange, A J Verdelle, Julia Blackburn, Linda Dahl, Farah Griffin, Sherrie Tucker, Rachel Huang
(BBC Radio 2 Documentary)

Neneh Cherry, Terri Lyne Carrington, Yolande Bavan, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Susheela Raman, Chrissie Hynde, Lalah Hathaway, Fontella Bass, Me'shell Ndegeocello, Carleen Anderson, Amy Winehouse, Angelique Kidjo, Farah Jasmine Griffin.
(London Barbican Performance)

Nancy Wilson, Terri Lyne Carrington, Dianne Reeves, Rita Coolidge, Niki Harris, Joan Osborne, Rokia Traore.
(USA Tour)

The London Production Team

Writer and Producer - Sarah Cropper

Lighting Designer – Rick Fisher

Production Manager – Vicky Atkinson (for the Barbican)

UK Band and Orchestra

Kirk Whalum – tenor saxophone

Mitchel Forman – piano/keyboards

Ray Fuller – electric guitar

Frank McComb – keyboards/backing vocals

Reginald Veal – electric/double bass

Cathy Thompson – violin

Everton Nelson – violin
Nick Barr – viola
Chris Worsey – cello
Mike Smith – alto saxophone/flute
Ben Castle – tenor saxophone/clarinet
Chris Stoor – trumpet
Nichol Thompson – trombone
Thomas Dyani – percussion

Arranger/Musical Director – Terri Lyne Carrington
Assistant Arranger/Conductor – Ed Barguiarea

US Band

James Genus - bass
Paul Bollenback - guitar
Mitchel Forman – piano/keyboards
Tineke Postma - saxophones
Rob Smith – saxophone/trumpet
Munyungo Jackson – percussion

Arranger/Musical Director – Terri Lyne Carrington
Assistant Arranger/Conductor – Ed Barguiarea



The Billie And Me Experience

Last year I had the honour of being part of a wonderful musical celebration of Billie Holiday. It was called "Billie and Me". I took on the role of 'narrator' for the production, and as I read the story of Billie to the audience and they listened to the remarkable musical performances, it seemed to me that a story was being told for the first time -- the story of who Billie really was and the deeply profound influence she had and still has on women around the world. I truly believe in the power of "Billie and Me" and I would love to see it staged, in a long-running production. - *Nancy Wilson*

My participation in 'Billie and Me' was both enriching and empowering. Billie's spirit brings every singer who truly listens home to their true selves; Billie's helped me to understand that a voice is not just the sound you hear but the unleashing of the soul. At the end of the tour, the project was no longer referred to as "Billie and Me," but as "Billie in Me." - *Dianne Reeves*

Billie's unique singing struck an eternal chord – the thing that inspires all artists and has brought audiences joy for decades. - *Chrissie Hynde*

I have been listening to Billie Holiday since I was a little girl. I have studied all the ranges in the different emotions that she conveyed through her voice. It changed my life -- as a woman, as a singer, as an artist, with my pain and suffering, my vulnerability and disappointments. I had no idea at the age of 12 that I would soon be living the lyrics I had grown to love so early on in my life. As I grew and life changed, so did the lyrics. With every bad experience, the lyrics grew nearer and dearer to me. I knew that I was Billie and she was me. I understood her for her and nothing more, and wasn't anybody's business if I did! I have never been more ready to explore my musical destiny [Billie and Me] than I am right now. - *Jaguar Wright*

I have seen "Billie and Me" grow -- from its beginnings as a radio series for BBC Radio 2 – to the London Barbican show where ten incredible female artists took the adapted radio show to the stage – paying tribute to their ancestor the great Billie Holiday. I narrated both the Radio 2 and Barbican shows. Through the whole process I was blown away by the real story of Billie and by the impact she has had on women across the world. It's because of this relationship between Billie and all of us women, that this is no ordinary production. This is a story that needs to be told over and over again. Terri Lyne Carrington's music is awesome, the story of Billie is mind-blowing -- this show should be on the stage fulltime... - *Neneh Cherry*

Working on "Billie and Me" was one of the most gratifying experiences in my life. I was able to use the many facets of my creative energy to musically enhance Sarah Cropper's concept

for this production. I was able to work on it from beginning to end, which is something I had never had the luxury of doing before. Working with all of the incredible singers was a joy and a welcomed challenge. I look forward to a long and fruitful life for "Billie and Me." - *Terri Lyne Carrington*

The exciting thing for me was to hear evidence of how Billie's voice has influenced artists from so many different genres of music. She was more than just a jazz singer and the show brought together many different styles of music. - *Joan Osborne*

"Billie and Me" was a very empowering experience for me. As a devotee of Billie Holiday, and of many of the women I had the privilege of sharing the stage with for that event, the experience was immeasurable. - *Lalah Hathaway*

I have seen and participated in many shows about Billie Holiday. However, the power, joy and innovative creativity of "Billie and Me" was especially compelling because the performers were all women interpreting in their own styles, her music - yet they were one in their love, respect and admiration for Lady Day: a woman living in those difficult times, transcending sociopolitical mores, racism and sexism. The audience were enfolded in the magical embrace of her Voice, Music, Art and Spirit - my! what a hauntingly magnificent spirit. I know she was present that night, nodding her head, gently approvingly smiling. It was not just Billie and Me, Billie and You, but Billie and the World. - *Yolande Bavan*

The "Billie & Me" concert was for me probably the most enriching feminine vocal encounter I ever experienced. Headed by Terri Lyne Carrington, as Musical Director, with star musicians, and vocalists from many different musical backgrounds. To have shared the love of Billie Holiday with so many glorious and unique voices, such as Chrissie Hynde, Angelique Kidjo, Yolande Bavan, Neneh Cherry, Fontella Bass and Amy Winehouse was monumental. I thank Terri Lyne and Sarah Cropper for their vision, and for including me in such a majestic collaboration. This project is undeniable proof of the universal impact of Billie Holiday, our "Lady Day." - *Dee Dee Bridgewater*



To Billie With Love

...Billie had the ability to be like the land, she was able to take every woman's tears - black or white, from my mother to a woman in Brooklyn to a woman in Russia - that they all felt that this woman understood their desires, their passion, their secrets, I mean that just doesn't happen every year... There's something when she sings that makes you feel like that she knows what you are going through - because she does. You can't read the book, so when we hear her sing we know that she knows and there's something about that - there's a deep friendship that I think women have had with her over the years because she's walked the road before us... - *Tori Amos*

I was a kid in NY City in the 70's which was a highly politicized time, so we all learned about Billie Holiday as an icon: she was black, she was dignified, she was called 'Lady Day' because she never pandered to the crowd's wishes, and in terms of the music: it's classic, it's beautiful, and it never misses... - *Suzanne Vega*

Some people have a brilliance - it comes from way deep inside and there isn't any way to describe it, but it comes to mind, seeing Billie on television, and wanting to cry, and it has to do with some soul that comes through. There's something so deep in what she did that I think she's a great artist and will really last forever... - *Joan Baez*

When I was first in NY City I bought one of these amazing posters, it's kind of a dayglo poster in bright blue and orange and with a wonderful flower in her hair, and that was on every wall of every apartment with thumb tacks and tape, and it was so chewed round the edges that when I got my first check that I think was for \$5000 for signing with Warner Brothers records, the first thing I did was to take it to a proper framing place and get them to frame it...and it's still on the wall in my house... - *Emmylou Harris*

I think that her great communication was reality. You could hear her sing something and think 'Oh my God.... I know how you feel Lady!' - *Annie Ross*

Her singing was just so deep and so rich and so telling, it was beyond story telling: the ability to just be able to speak to you in an intimate kind of way. And at a young age at 19 and 20 I needed to hear her... - *Dianne Reeves*

Billie's sound reminded me of my own loneliness. I had been sent from California as a small child with no companion other than my brother - who was 2 years older than me - I was 3. We were sent with tags on our arms - without chaperons. My brother and I felt we had been totally abandoned. When I heard Billie Holiday's voice it reminded me of trains, going somewhere, in the dark... - *Maya Angelou*

Reviews

13 APRIL 2004
Holiday Love-Affair
PAUL MORLEY

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

The male history of rock and pop, whether it starts with Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry or Robert Johnson, has been told again and again. An equivalent female story is told less often.

Such a story might describe how, say, Billie Holiday pioneered a type of tough and tender confessional singing that influenced some of the most successful popular music of the past 30 years. In fact, the current success of Norah Jones, only one of Holiday's rich, comforting descendants, makes 'Billie and Me', an evening at the Barbican devoted to the singer, songwriter and performing genius, all the more timely and powerful a celebration of her huge, largely unexplored impact.

'Billie and Me' was originally a six part radio series uncovering the devotion modern female musicians feel towards a singer whose life and art were so dramatically connected. To capture the many sides and voices of Holiday – and to transfer a radio series into one night in a London concert hall – required a dozen singers and musicians at the top of their form.

Lightly linking the various performances were Neneh Cherry (used here, sadly only as a host rather than a singer), and Farah Jasmine Griffin, an American academic, who read out a sparse narrative illuminating Holiday's dangerous, exciting and short life. This was not the night, though, to note Holiday's mental and physical decline. This was a big, lovely, "thank you," emphasising the self-belief, not the self-doubts.

The evening's musical director was Terri Lyne Carrington, a jazz drummer who protectively patrolled Billie's beat, energetically co-ordinating musical settings that embraced tough blues and sweet soul, sexy bop and brassy swing. It all explicitly demonstrated how Holiday's style has ended up woven into the texture of buttery MOR soul, coarse funk, jazz-pop and time stretching trip hop.

Meshell Ndegeocello as a guest bassist projected the sheer strength of Billie, her fluid abrasive riffs a metaphor for the way Billie kept her wits about her in a white male world. Lalah Hathaway was the smooth, seductive Billie; Amy Winehouse was a highly-strung Billie, bursting with peculiar, untamed narcissistic power. Chrissie Hynde was the ravishing, source less vocal beauty; Carleen Anderson the breathtaking prodigy. Fontella Bass was the uncompromising, dominant black force; Angelique Kidjo and Susheela Raman the vulnerable enigma that transcended race, country, time. The presence of the Sri Lankan actress Yolande Bavan, a friend of Billie, offered deliciously ebullient hints at how Billie might have aged, as a kind of living legend who would be forgiven all eccentricity.

And all of these Billies were flamboyantly contained within Dee Dee Bridgewater's possessed interpretation of Holiday as a divine, cracking mixture of deep-thinking artist and full-on show business entertainer. A singer who could romp through the high camp of 'Lover Come Back to Me' and feel all the pain of 'Strange Fruit. A singer who could mood-swing from the spirited to the spiritual with sensational grace.

At the end of the evening all the Lady Days for a day lined up to acknowledge that they found their voice because Billie found hers, and turned 'I'll Be Seeing You' into a love song for Billie, for her voice, her class, her sex. It was girl power to the power of 100.

The Lady Wins The Day
TIM CUMMING
★★★★★



How to cover the songs of a legend? The Barbican's tribute to Billie Holiday gets to the heart of the business by making a multi-voiced dialogue of an evening that combines performances from a worldwide collection of divas with photographic stills, audio excerpts and readings to create a picture not only of the source, but also of the power that source has had over subsequent generations.

Rocker Chrissie Hynde and new English diva Amy Winehouse join World Music stars Susheela Raman and Angelique Kidjo and a range of platinum standard R&B and Soul singers such as Fontella Bass, Carleen Anderson and Dee Dee Bridgewater. The diva meter is off the scale tonight, and the Barbican Hall stage suddenly looks small, but luckily, egos have been checked at the door along with the histrionics, and 'Billie and Me' proves a thrilling combination of singers hitting their form behind a band arranged by drummer Terri Lyne Carrington. Originally a six part radio tribute, Billie and Me's spare narrative provides a fresh context for songs given some seriously new interpretations, ranging from a West-African riot on 'The Man I love' to Lalah Hathaway's late night take on 'God Bless the Child'.

Mixing strings and brass with crack American players, the band can summon up the smoky Forties small combo sound along with thick, swampy funk – most vividly on the first half climax of Fontella Bass taking 'Travellin' down a slinky soul route that screams 'hit single' to any record execs in the audience.

Neneh Cherry has the job of MC and introduces the evening as 'women artists paying tribute to their ancestor'. First up is the youngest 20-year old Amy Winehouse, fresh from the acclaim for her debut album, fronting with Hathaway on a powerful, funky rendition of 'Ain't Nobody's Business'.

From the start, it's an evening that holds aloft the memory of a figure often seen as the ultimate victim. Though the drug use and domestic abuse fetishised by many are touched on in the biographical interludes between songs, the message of the evening is very much about empowerment over desolation. Like her songs, hardship, racism and abuse speak for themselves.

Chrissie Hynde turns in her elegant rock'n'roll slur on 'I Cover the Waterfront', a perfect fit for the middle-distance smokiness of her voice. Dee Dee Bridgewater, who won an Olivier for her starring role in 'Lady Day', apologises before a scorching 'I Hear Music'. "If [Holiday's] voice comes out, excuse me, I can't help it, it's in me". When that voice does emerge it brings much of the audience to its feet.

Each of tonight's singers can dominate any stage they care to walk on to, and the energy level is kept up through a well-drilled set. Angelique Kidjo comes on with an extra bassist to fatten her sound, while Meshell Ndegeocello carries 'Strange Fruit' with Mitch Foreman's skeletal piano. It's a hair-raising performance, and a long, intense instrumental interlude follows, during which Ndegeocello gives a brief speech encompassing American slavery, American wealth, and those charred bodies hung from a bridge over the Euphrates. Strange Fruit travels a long way, and tonight the song retains all its eerie power.

A crackling blues from Fontella Bass redirects the flow towards a delicate reading of 'For All We Know', from veteran singer Yolande Bavan, who first met Billie in Paris when she was 20. She holds the only direct personal link to Holiday, and her appearance heralds the finale. By the reprise of 'Travellin', all 10 divas are on stage together, the audience is on its feet along with most

of the band, and you get the feeling that none of them can quite believe they're there, or that such an ambitious tribute came off so well.

7 APRIL 2004

*Billie Holiday's Ecstatic
Glamour Gets Reinvented*
JOHN FORDHAM

★★★★★

theguardian

The jazz cognoscenti spend a lot of time feeling misunderstood, and sometimes they secretly enjoy it. But few things make jazz-lovers groan louder, and with more justice, than media enthusiasm for heartache, heroin and horror stories from jazz life. Sarah Cropper, the British musician and radio producer, triumphantly explored an alternative recently with the BBC radio-doc series 'Billie and Me' - a reappraisal of Billie Holiday as a positive, complex, life-embracing genius rather than the usual tragic victim. The show was rousingly reworked as a concert in the Barbican's Only Connect series on Monday.

Thirteen female guest artists performed singly, in duets and finally all together before a punchy supporting band showcasing excellent Memphis saxophonist Kirk Whalum and pianist Mitch Forman, driven and directed by Terri Lyne Carrington on drums. Neneh Cherry and academic Farah Jasmine Griffin narrated, and powerful images of Holiday - many showing her as a working musician at ease with star contemporaries like Lester Young and Count Basie - appeared behind the performers.

Reinventing Holiday's contribution as an ecstatic clamour of gratitude rather than the familiar whispered heartbreak undoubtedly turned the evening over to a great deal of storming contemporary funk, with Dee Dee Bridgewater's chillingly entranced account of 'Strange Fruit' being one of the rare visits to the haunting and dangerous slow lyricism that was central to Holiday's work. The point was not Holiday mimicry, but a celebration of her life through the lives of working female performers today, doing what they do best.

Amy Winehouse and Lalah Hathaway respectively contributed edgy urgency and stately soulfulness to 'Ain't Nobody's Business', and Carleen Anderson sang with awesomely controlled soul and blues power all evening, particularly on 'Fine and Mellow'. Holiday's friend Yolande Bavan came closest to the star's fragility with a delicately moving 'For All We Know'.

Dee Dee Bridgewater blew the roof off twice in the first half - on 'I Hear Music' and 'Lover Come Back to Me' - with the jazziest and most instrument-like virtuosity of all the singers, and Angelique Kidjo and the electric bassist Meshell Ndegeocello clattered exhilaratingly through a drum'n'bass account of 'The Man I Love'. The finale brought everybody on, swapping phrases through the gossamer 'Travellin'. The collective roar from the audience had to struggle to match a tour de force of an ending.

6 APRIL 2004

Sweet Sound of Billie's Blues
JACK MASSARIK

 Evening Standard

Who would have thought a radio documentary about Billie Holiday could evoke such powerful streams of female consciousness? Having invited a diverse group of modern singers to reassess the tragic American diva, producer Sarah Cropper was surprised by the intensity of their feelings.

As the stars' tributes grew, Cropper realized that all this music and emotion just had to take to the stage.

Last night it finally did, with an eloquent narrative co-presented by Neneh Cherry and US academic Farah Jasmine Griffin, a superb cast of female vocal talent and predictably sensational results. From the opening number, 'Ain't Nobody's Business If I Do', there wasn't a false note.

Some might have wondered what young Amy Winehouse was doing up there with the honey-voiced Lalah Hathaway, but the London teenager, looking absolutely star struck, kept things snappily real.

Chrissie Hynde made tidy work of 'I Cover the Waterfront' before the irrepressible Dee Dee Bridgewater cranked things up a gear. "Excuse me if I start sounding like Billie" said Dee Dee, who had portrayed her in 'Lady Day' at the Donmar Warehouse, "but she's just in me". In fact, apart from an appropriately somber version of 'Strange Fruit', her storming style, as always, owed more to Ella Fitzgerald.

In the second half, Meshell Ndegeocello punched some bass, world music stars Angelique Kidjo (The Man I Love) and Susheela Raman (I'm a Fool to Want You) revealed the jazz in their soul, the venerable Yolande Bavan reminisced about Billie, and Carleen Anderson, playing piano, shared a fine blues medley with Hathaway and the stately Fontella Bass.

Tenorist Kirk Whalum, so boring on his smooth-jazz albums yet so sensual and helpful behind these singers, was the star of a fine Anglo-US band led crisply from the drums by Terri Lyne Carrington. The commentary was kept light, a wise decision considering the vocal riches on stage and the impact of the giant back-projections of Billie, whose every picture told a story. Her expressive face radiated emotions – joy, melancholy, grief, fear of death – with such disturbing clarity.

As the cast took their final bow, they turned in line to salute her black and white image, a gesture that was thematically absolutely right. "Thank you for your music, your beauty and your life" said Cherry as applause swelled.

A memorable one night stand and, who knows, possibly a future West End hit. Stranger things have happened.

WED APRIL 7TH
Holiday's Tribute Bears
Strange Fruit
LISA VERRICO
★★★★

THE  **TIMES**

Last year Neneh Cherry narrated a radio series about Billie Holiday. This week she helped to transfer the acclaimed women-only production to a packed Barbican stage. Often such ideas are better in theory than in practice, but this one worked.

There were changes, of course – mainly less talk, more music, which meant a potted Holiday history, rather than the attempt of the original series to reassess the legend's life. There were slides of the singer, snippets of her talking in interview and Cherry's narration, which didn't ignore Holiday's turbulent personal life but focused on her risk-taking, groundbreaking career.

The draw of the evening, however, was more than a dozen covers of Holiday songs. Unfortunately, not all of the artists who contributed to the radio show could make it – so no Debbie Harry, Jill Scott or Mary J Blige. But the lineup was still superb. After Cherry's

introduction, the newcomer Amy Winehouse teamed up with Lalah Hathaway on 'Ain't Nobody's Business'. Winehouse wore a black, crepe, sleeveless dress and looked much more at ease than she did during her own recent shows. Then again, she did have 11 A-list musicians behind her.

Next on was surprise guest Chrissie Hynde, whom the audience was clearly pleased, if a little perplexed to see. Hynde isn't an obvious Holiday devotee, and it was odd to hear her perform a slow, jazzy version of 'I Cover the Waterfront', backed by brushed drums, tinkling piano and sax. It was even stranger to watch her stand still in a sober suit, then shuffle off without uttering a word. In fact, that was the one flaw of the evening. Had the singers explained what they like about Holiday, or how they had discovered her, it would have been more intimate. The veteran jazz singer Dee Dee Bridgewater finally broke the ice by chatting about playing Holiday in the stage musical 'Lady Day'. She also gave three of the night's best performances, of 'I Hear Music', and 'Lover Come Back to Me' in the first half of the show and the seminal 'Strange Fruit', just after the interval. Bridgewater not only came closest to sounding like Holiday, she had the moves down pat, swaying in a floor-length green dress and playing with an old-fashioned fan in her hand.

Among the other guests were Me'shell Ndegeocello, Carleen Anderson, who sang a smoky jazz cover of 'Some Other Spring', and Fontella Bass, who turned 'Travelin"', into a broody R'n'B number. The night ended with an ensemble performance of 'I'll Be Seeing You', for which even Cherry left her lectern and joined in.

If the ladies have their way, a Holiday revival won't be far off.