

An electrifying night of jazz
and music history!
- Jazziz Magazine

a dynamo with a sparkling yet demure
stage presence in her own right.
- Tolucan Times

Oceanside Theatre Company & California Coastal Arts Foundation Present

BILLIE!

BACKSTAGE WITH LADY DAY

September 23 - October 2

Production
Sponsors

Piper

THE
SEABIRD


CALIFORNIA COASTAL
ARTS FOUNDATION

Tickets

General Admission \$35

Seniors \$30

Students & Military \$20



Tickets at OceansideTheatre.org or 760-433-8900
Brooks Theater, 217 N. Coast Highway, Oceanside


OCEANSIDE
THEATRE COMPANY
760.433.8900

Oceanside Theatre Company
& California Capital Arts Foundation
present

BILLIE!

BACKSTAGE WITH LADY DAY

Starring Synthia L. Hardy
as
Billie Holiday

Directed by Bryan Rasmussen
Written by Synthia L. Hardy

Production Sponsors
Seabird Resort,
Home of Piper Restaurant
California Coastal Arts Foundation

Opening Night Sponsor
Bliss Tea & Treats

* Photography, videotaping or audio recording of this production is strictly prohibited. Thank you for your cooperation.

Artistic Director's Note

Like many of you, I have long been a fan of Billie Holiday's music, having heard it often growing up in my home and traveling in the car with my family. Her music moved millions of hearts (and feet), and her distinct voice would stay in my mind for hours after hearing it. Her story is not one that I knew much about, however.

When I was made aware of the incredible piece that Synthia L. Hardy had written and been performing in and around Los Angeles for well over a decade, I jumped at the opportunity to bring it to Oceanside. The piece works wonderfully in our space and the story is just as important to share today as it was when Synthia first wrote it. And, of course, there is the music. The music that reached so many in the 40s and 50s, and continues to inspire and delight us all today. It is such a rare treat to be able to present a live musical experience that so beautifully captures the essence of a complex woman who passed away over 60 years ago.

We hope you enjoy the performance and we hope to see you again at The Brooks for all the wonderful programming we have in store for the months ahead. Thank you for spending a few hours with us, and thank you for being a part of our vibrant and diverse Oceanside community.



Ted Leib, Artistic Director

Production Staff

Stage Manager

Morgan Zwonitzer

Props Master

Morgan Zwonitzer

Set Dresser

Morgan Zwonitzer

Audio Engineer

Ted Leib

Lighting Technician

Ted Leib

Assistant Stage Managers

Tatum Carson

Taran Whelen

Creative Team

Synthia L. Hardy, Writer and Performer



Emmy Award-winner Cynthia L. Hardy has appeared in film, T.V., commercials and on stage nationally and internationally – most recently in the film, *Sylvie's Love*. In addition to her NAACP Theatre Awards and Artistic Director Achievement Awards for *Billie! Backstage With Lady Day*, Hardy won an Emmy Award for the documentary, *Precious Memories: A Stroll*

Down 47th Street. Her other awards and nominations include another NAACP Theatre Award, Dramalogue Critics Award (twice), and LA Weekly Award. Originally from Chicago, Hardy has appeared in a variety of works including *Home*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Flyin' West*, *Rap Master Ronnie*, *The Little Dreamer: A Night in the Life of Bessie Smith* and *A Corner of Gold*. As a singer, she toured with various Oldies and Doo Wop tribute groups. She has also written and starred in her own cabaret show, *Dinner Musicale with Cynthia & Friends*.

Bryan Rasmussen, Director



An award-winning actor, director, producer, teacher, coach and Artistic Director of The Whitefire Theatre, Bryan has produced over 200 shows including over 50 world premieres. He recently directed the world premiere solo show *Evolution of Soul 685* and the solo-musical *Down the Rabbit Hole* with pop star Erin Jividen, which opened off-Broadway. He

also founded the famous *Itchey Foot Cabaret* in downtown L.A. His work includes: directing and starring in the 50th Anniversary production of Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter*, directing the world premieres of the eco-musical *Season of Change* and *Mark Twain in the 21st Century*, producing Judy Tenuda's *Mountain Girl Musical*, directing his critically-acclaimed version of *Blood Brothers*, and is currently performing in and producing *Shorts*. On screen, he has been seen on *Southland*, *Scandal*, *Bones*, *The Mentalist* and more.

Musicians

Woody Woods, Piano



Raised in Los Angeles, Woods is a self-taught composer, conductor, lyricist, pianist, and author. He began directing bands and writing original arrangements in high school jazz band when he switched from woodwinds to the piano. He's favored the piano ever since and now performs for audiences around the world.

Russell Bizzett, Drums



A fixture in the jazz world, Bizzett has been touring since the 1970s and played with the likes of Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters and Bo Diddly. More recently, he has released albums with the local talents of pianist Joshua White and bassist Rob Thorsen. He has three solo records, including his 2017 album *Fortaleza*.

Marcus Wilcher, Saxophone



Dr. Marcus Wilcher is a California-based composer, saxophonist, and educator. He has received several accolades for his work including an ASCAP Young Composer Award and commissions from the New York Youth Symphony Jazz. Wilcher has worked with Andre Hayward, and Delfeayo Marsalis.

Gedeon Deák, Bass



A bassist with the Marcia Forman Band, Gedeon Deák has been playing the bass guitar in San Diego since 2017. He attended Berklee College of Music, before completing degrees in Psychology. A professor of cognitive science at UCSD, he also recently joined the indie rock/pop band Slum Summer.