

AUDITION INFORMATION



LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR & GRILL

Written by Lanie Robertson

Directed by Dee Selmore

Auditions: Nov 21 & 22, 2021 at 7pm
Performances: Jan 14-30, 2022

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in auditioning for a Theatre Tallahassee production!

If you've auditioned for us before, welcome back!

If this is your first time auditioning at Theatre Tallahassee, we're thrilled to have you! We've been around now for 70 years, and we wouldn't have lasted so long without new people, new talent, and new voices.

Whether you're a veteran performer who just moved to town or you've never been on stage before but really want to try, we'd like to encourage you to audition for shows at Theatre Tallahassee.

We're aware that auditioning can be an overwhelming experience, even if you've done it a hundred times before. We've put this information booklet together for you to help you learn a little more about the play, the characters you will be reading for, and to give you some idea of what to expect during auditions.

Please read over the character list and director's comments, and pay attention to any specific audition requirements for this show. Then review any script sides provided. You will also need to fill out and submit an audition form.

Break a leg!

ABOUT OUR AUDITIONS

Theatre Tallahassee auditions are open, and we want to encourage diversity – we try our best to discourage directors from pre-casting roles. And unless specified in the character list, most roles are open to all races and ethnicities.

Know what you're auditioning for. Do a little research on the play and characters. Audition sides are included in this packet, as well as a character breakdown to give you some idea of which roles you'd like to audition for.

Audition requirements and formats may vary from show to show. Some directors prefer “closed” auditions where actors wait in a separate room until called. Some like to have every actor in the room. Some prefer monologues, or cold readings, or need you to sing. This audition packet should give you an idea of what you can expect.

We know that it can be disappointing not to get a part. We always have more people audition than we have roles for, and there are many factors that directors have to weigh when casting. We encourage you to audition often. Just because you weren't right for one role, doesn't mean that you won't be perfect for another.

We look forward to seeing you on stage. Break a leg!

COVID CHANGES

At this time, Theatre Tallahassee is operating with limited seating capacity to allow for some social distancing in our audiences. Audience members are required to wear a mask while in the building. We are also following the current CDC guidelines for COVID safety as much as we are able. Decisions regarding social distancing are constantly evolving and the situation may have improved by the time this show opens in January.

Theatre Tallahassee requires all actors, crew, and staff to be fully vaccinated at least 14 days prior to the first in-person rehearsal. Other precautions such as temperature checks, and mask-wearing plus testing are possible, pending the environment at the time that rehearsal commences.

A reminder: as a non-profit, community theatre, we are unable to provide payment for actors, and we understand that the risks of an unmasked performance at this time may be too high for some volunteer actors, despite all the precautions we will be taking to minimize that risk. Please consider this before auditioning.

THE PLAY

The time is 1959. The place is a seedy bar in Philadelphia. The audience is about to witness one of Billie Holiday's last performances, given four months before her death. More than a dozen musical numbers are interlaced with salty, often humorous, reminiscences to project a riveting portrait of the lady and her music.

ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

DEE SELMORE

Dee received her bachelor's degree from Florida A&M University in Theatre Performance, and master's degrees from Florida State University in Theatre and Full Sail University in Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Dee is currently pursuing a PhD in Theatre Studies and Research at Florida State University. She is a co-founder of the Essential Theatrical Associates, and the owner of Oluse Performing Arts. Her directing credits include *Yellowman* (FAMU), *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf* (University of Florida), and *The Counterfeit* (an independent production). Acting credits include *Skeleton Crew* (Faye, American Stage - Theatre Tampa Bay Award for Outstanding Performance by a Lead Actress in a Play), *A Raisin in the Sun* (Mrs. Johnson, American Stage), *Macbeth* (Lady Macbeth, Digital Shakespeare Co.), *Sister Act* (Deloris Van Cartier, Round Barn Theatre), *The Color Purple* (Sofia, Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Calpurnia, Mill Mountain Theatre), *Doubt* (Mrs. Muller, Crane River Theatre), *Hairspray* (Motormouth Maybelle, Shenandoah Summer Music Theatre), and *Footloose* (Vi Moore, Jenny Wiley Theatre). Dee has also performed several readings at the National Black Theatre Festival.

LADY DAY

AT
EMERSON'S
BAR & GRILL

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Actors must be able to commit to all performance dates & tech/dress rehearsals.

Actors must also be able to do virtual rehearsals via Zoom or similar app, and be willing and able to wear masks for in-person rehearsals, and take COVID tests as required.

○ AUDITIONS

Sun, Nov 21 & Mon, Nov 22,
7-10pm

Tues, Nov 23

Call backs by invitation only

REHEARSAL PERIOD

Rehearsals are currently scheduled
Tues-Sat from 6-8pm. Days and
hours around holidays may vary.

TECH WEEK: JAN 3-13

Tech runs & dress rehearsals on
stage (masked). Will need negative
COVID Tests.

PERFORMANCES

January 14-16
January 21-23
January 28-30

NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

CHARACTERS

BILLIE HOLIDAY - (*female, black, age 44*) From the script: The great jazz singer in the last year of her life.

Director's Notes: Billie Holiday has a romantic personality, but her love is more impersonal as she tends to be focused on her dreams instead. When not in harmony with her true nature, Billie can fall to moodiness, or become aloof, and withdrawn. She can also become timid, uncertain, and ungrateful, putting the blame for her troubles on others or the world.

More information:

[Billie Holiday. Celebrities Galore - The Spiritual Encyclopaedia Of The Famous.](#)

HOW TO AUDITION

Important Note: This show auditioned nearly a year ago, as it was originally part of our 2020-2021 Season. The decision to postpone it until this season to perform it live was made after the show was cast. The director is primarily holding auditions to find an alternate/ understudy for the role. This person will be guaranteed a set number of performances to be determined by the director.

Performers who are interested should prepare one of the sides included in this packet for the audition, and one side for the call-back. Performers should also choose a song from the show to perform (list on next page). No accents are required.

You can download and fill out an audition form by clicking one of the links below:

- [PDF version here](#)
- [Microsoft Word \(.docx\) version here](#)

SONG LIST

Songs to choose from for auditions. An accompanist will be provided.

Crazy He Calls Me

God Bless the Child

Sombody's On My Mind

Strange Fruit

What a Little Moonlight Can Do

I Wonder Where Our Love Has Gone

Easy Livin'

When a Woman Loves a Man

Foolin' Myself

Don't Explain

Deepsong

Gimmie a Pig Foot

Taint Nobody's Biz-ness

Baby Doll

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BILLIE

Thank you. So much. I love it. (*SHE laughs.*) You know that. Love it. Makes me feel good. I'm even glad to be back in Philly and that's somethin' for me. You know that. Philly's been the rat's ass for me. Shit. I used to tell everybody when I die I don't care if I go to Heaven or Hell long's it ain't in Philly. But I love singin' here at Emerson's Bar again. It's great. I love it. Emerson and me is ol' drinkin' buddies, ain't we, Em? We go all the way back to the bad ol' days. Em give me these flowers. I used to couldn't sing 'less I had flowers in my damn head. An' they had to be gardenias. Em never forgot that. No matter how tough things got. So ever'time I come to Philly, Em'd have a box of 'em for me. Over there behind the bar. I didn't put 'em on tonight, Em, 'cause I'm the new Billie now. An' I don't need flowers. D.J. 's always talkin' on the radio 'bout the NEW Billie as opposed to the OLD Billie. Said I should change my name to Lady YES-TERday. What they want's the old Billie. That's a crock. Nobody's gettin' any younger. Leastways nobody I know. Shit. But they gotta make a livin' too. I don't care. I just wanna sing. That's all. But they won't let me sing in New York, see, an' singin' in a nice small club like this? There's nothin' like it. Not all the big bands or nothin's so nice as this. Just like I was home an' all of you was my friends. Know what I mean? I love to sing. Singin' is livin' to me, an' they won't let me.

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BILLIE

See, I KNOW who I am now is because of who I was THEN. What I am an' what I was come from wantin' Louis' feelin' and Bessie Smith's big sound. For the longest time imaginable that's all I was, was that longin' walkin' round on two legs. *(laughs)* When I was a stupidass kid in Baltimore I scrubbed the steps to the local fancy house run by a big ass woman named Alice Dean. She wore these humongus red velvet hats with bird-of-paradise feathers, see, so I wanted to buy one of those hats for the Duchess. That was my Mom. I didn't know those hats was kind of a walking advertisement for bitches who was sellin' it. *(laughs)* Mom didn't know that either. She wasn't too much older'n me an' she wasn't a hell of a lot smarter neither. She never did get more'n five feet tall and weighed eighty pounds while I was over 200 pounds by the time I was twelve. So we was pals like I was her sister. But at Alice Dean's house, see, I got to play these records till I practically wore them all out. Also that damn ol' wind-up victrola which was the only kind they had anywhere's in those days. That was about 1922 or three or so. See, at Miss Dean's Parlor and Entertainment Establishment the girls there was half colored. Whore houses or sportin' houses as they was called was the only place white folks and coloreds could meet. They sure wasn't allowed to meet in no church. And all those bitches at Miss Dean's cat house had all these damn Louis Armstrong records and Bessie Smith records and I was gassin' my fat ass out playin' 'em. That's when I started to sing.

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BILLIE

So everything was smooth as silk till I realized all of a sudden I had to use the bathroom in the worst way. I mean, my kidneys was almost to bust an' float me outta there right into the main dining room, an' I knew damn well they didn't want that. So I got up an' asked this black dude who looked like he might have had some sense where was the bathroom an' he asked me why I wanted to know, thereby provin' he didn't have any more sense than I had in askin'. I shoulda found it on my own. Anyway, while I was tryin' to explain to him that I didn't really need to go there to powder my nose, if that's what was worryin' him. That it was for a more essential reason than that, when this blond bitch comes in the kitchen from the dining room. Somebody musta heard me askin' this dude an' run off to get this bitch to bring her into the discussion. Now, she was the maitresse dee who wouldn't let me into the dining room to begin with. So she saunters up real big, still clutchin' all these big red plush covered menus under her left tit and says, "Just what exactly seems to be the trouble here?" an' I look at her, see, like where'd the fuck she come from an' go "The trouble seem to be that this dude can't answer a simple question." So then I knew somebody had ran to get her 'cause she says, "I'm sorry, Miss Day, but we don't have toilets for the colored." An' I said, "Listen, honey, you have me confused. I'm not Doris Day. I'm Billie Holiday.

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BILLIE

Dance? I ain't never been no dancer, Sonny. You know that. Not since't I was sixteen in Harlem at this house run by a white bitch name Florence Williams. Mom had took me there to be a maid, see, but I knew as soon 's I laid eyes on the lamp shades and what they called a "chaise lounge" what my duties was goin' to be, but I didn't say nothin' to Mom because she really thought what this bitch Florence wanted was a maid. So I got the job an' did good because I was the only colored bitch in the place, but it drove me crazy, see, and I just couldn't stand it, an• this one guy hurt me so bad I bled solid for a week, so I dragged myself outta there an' hit ever place on Seventh Avenue between 139th Street an' 133rd, askin' for work. An' I was all set to walk all the way down to the Battery an' jump. in ifnobody'd hired me when I got to this place called Pod's and Jerry's an' they had a sign in the window sayin' "Dancer Wanted" so I went in an' told 'em I was a great dancer an' I wanted the job. (laughs) I musta been a sight 'cause I was more'n 200 pounds an' weak from bleedin' all week an' sick an' tired an' hungry an' ever other damn thing too. So the piano player started to play and I danced the only two steps I knew which was the time step an' the crossover ... Danced 'em over an' over an' the piano player stopped an' asked me to please stop wastin' his time, but he must have felt sorry for me cause he said, "Can you sing?" an' I said, "Sure, but what's that? Ever damn body can sing." So I sang. An' they went crazy. An' after that come Benny Goodman to see me, an' the Apollo where I was so scared on openin' night I stuck the flowers in my hair with the pins still in 'em an' lost so much blood I nearly passed out durin' the intermission, but I didn't 'cause the whole place was screamin' "We want Billie! We want . . . Bill . . . Billie."

CREDITS

LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR & GRILL

Written by Lanie Robertson

LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR AND GRILL is presented through special arrangement with Samuel French, Inc.

Director: Dee Selmore

THE THEATRE

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