



Sunday, March 1, 2015, 7pm
Zellerbach Hall

Cassandra Wilson



Mark Seliger

Coming Forth by Day: A Tribute to Billie Holiday

with

Kevin Breit, *guitar*
Charlie Burnham, *violin*
Jon Cowherd, *piano*.

John Davis, *drums*
Robby Marshall, *tenor saxophone, clarinet &
bass clarinet*
Lonnie Plaxico, *bass*

Tonight's program will be announced from the stage.

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CASSANDRA WILSON is an American jazz musician, vocalist, songwriter, and producer from Jackson, Mississippi. Described by critic Gary Giddins as “a singer blessed with an unmistakable timbre and attack who has expanded the playing field” by incorporating blues, country, and folk music into her work.

Ms. Wilson began playing piano at six, guitar by age twelve, and was working as a vocalist by the mid-1970s, singing a wide variety of material. After moving to New York City in the early 1980s, she met saxophonist Steve Coleman and became one of the founding members of the M-Base Collective.

At the completion of her stint with M-Base, Ms. Wilson sought a more acoustic context for her vocal expression. She signed with Blue Note Records in 1992 and released a landmark album, *Blue Light 'Til Dawn*, which would pave the way for a new generation of jazz singers seeking an approach and repertoire that challenged the supremacy of the American Standard songbook.

Ms. Wilson has continued interpreting in fresh and creative ways vintage blues, country, and folk music up to the present day. Her awards include two Grammy Awards, the Django d'Or, the Edison Music Award, and a marker on the Mississippi Blues Trail. She also performed one of the leading roles in Wynton Marsalis's *Blood on the Fields*, the first jazz composition to receive a Pulitzer Prize.

April 2015 brings us her tribute album for Billie Holiday's 100th birthday, *Coming Forth*

by Day: A Tribute to Billie Holiday. An otherworldly musical homage to legendary jazz vocalist Billie Holiday (born Eleanora Fagan on April 7, 1915) on the 100th anniversary of the singer's birth, *Coming Forth by Day* is Cassandra Wilson's moody, soulful new album showcase for contemporary yet timeless interpretations of standards associated with Lady Day. *Coming Forth by Day* was produced by Nick Launay, known as Nick Cave's producer for the last decade among many other adventurous credits.

Ms. Wilson has drawn inspiration from Billie Holiday for her entire life and chose the title as a way to honor the iconic singer: “Coming Forth by Day” is a literal English translation of the title of an ancient text, commonly known as *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*. The book is in actuality a Kemetite collection of scriptures more accurately titled *The Book of Coming Forth by Day*—prescriptions intended to assist both the living and deceased in their journey through life and the afterlife.

The album features eleven reinterpretations of standards associated with Lady Day, plus an original penned by Ms. Wilson—the dreamlike new “Last Song (for Lester),” imagined as a heartbreaking final message from Billie to her musical love, Lester Young. (Upon receiving the news that Young had passed away, Billie flew straight from Europe to his funeral but was denied the opportunity to sing by Young's family. She was distraught.)

Ms. Wilson recorded *Coming Forth by Day* in Los Angeles at Seedy Underbelly studios with an A-list musical team, including producer Launay (Nick Cave, Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Arcade Fire), guitarists T-Bone Burnett and Nick Zinner of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, string arranger Van Dyke Parks, and rhythm section of the Bad Seeds (drummer Thomas Wydler and bassist Martyn P. Casey).

“A dream of mine is happening,” said Ms. Wilson. “I've been in love with Billie Holiday's voice since the moment I heard it, and she has inspired me throughout my career.”