



Vocals - Billie Holiday  
Alto Saxophone - Benny Carter  
Bass - John Simmons  
Drums - Larry Bunker  
Guitar - Barney Kessel  
Piano - Jimmy Rowles  
Trumpet - Harry Edison

Recorded by Clef Records on August 23-25, 1955  
Recording Supervisor - Norman Granz

**HDTT**  
HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

# VELVET MOOD

SONGS BY BILLIE HOLIDAY



The first popular jazz singer to move audiences with the intense, personal feeling of classic blues, Billie Holiday changed the art of American pop vocals forever. More than a half-century after her death, it's difficult to believe that prior to her emergence, jazz and pop singers were tied to the Tin Pan Alley tradition and rarely personalized their songs; only blues singers like Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey actually gave the impression they had lived through what they were singing. Billie Holiday's highly stylized reading of this blues tradition revolutionized traditional pop, ripping the decades-long tradition of song plugging in two by refusing to compromise her artistry for either the song or the band. She made clear her debts to Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong (in her autobiography she admitted, "I always wanted Bessie's big sound and Pops' feeling"), but in truth her style was virtually her own, quite a shock in an age of interchangeable crooners and band singers.

With her spirit shining through on every recording, Holiday's technical expertise also excelled in comparison to the great majority of her contemporaries. Often bored by the tired old

Tin Pan Alley songs she was forced to record early in her career, Holiday fooled around with the beat and the melody, phrasing behind the beat and often rejuvenating the standard melody with harmonies borrowed from her favorite horn players, Armstrong and Lester Young. (She often said she tried to sing like a horn.) Her notorious private life -- a series of abusive relationships, substance addictions, and periods of depression -- undoubtedly assisted her legendary status, but Holiday's best performances ("Lover Man," "Don't Explain," "Strange Fruit," her own composition "God Bless the Child") remain among the most sensitive and accomplished vocal performances ever recorded. More than technical ability, more than purity of voice, what made Billie Holiday one of the best vocalists of the century -- easily the equal of Ella Fitzgerald or Frank Sinatra -- was her relentlessly individualist temperament, a quality that colored every one of her endlessly nuanced performances.

# BILLIE HOLIDAY VELVET MOOD

- 1 Prelude To A Kiss 5:30
  - 2 When Your Lover Has Gone 4:53
  - 3 Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone 4:16
  - 4 Nice Work If You Can Get It 3:47
  - 5 I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues 5:47
  - 6 What's New 4:13
  - 7 I Hadn't Anyone Till You 4:00
  - 8 Everything I Have Is Yours 4:27
- Total Time: 36:53**