# American Jazz Composer: Billie Holiday

Life challenges and certain Jazz artists like Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith inspired me to become one of the prominent jazz vocalists in the world (Layman 1). My father, Clarence Holiday who was a jazz musician also inspired me. Although I lacked a commanding vocal instrument, I had a unique performance concept that attracted many jazz lovers. Armstrong influenced this concept that included splendid, thrilling sense of time, melancholy voice, and a low-key hush that landed at the ultimate end of the beat (*Billie Holiday* YouTube). I danced around the beat, sang behind-the-beat in persistent momentum and swaying. “Your Mother's Son-in-Law" was my first jazz recording in 1933 under a renowned jazz producer John Hammond who found me performing in a Harlem jazz club. My career as a Jazz singer grew as I established series of recordings with jazz pianists like Teddy Wilson and jazz groups and bands like Count Basie's band. I have sung many other songs that reflect my romances.

I influenced the development of jazz by influencing performers who followed my unique jazz concepts. My early influence led to the induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. I set a performance pattern that influence many jazz artists over time. My gender-coding and sad jazz creation influenced the development of jazz (Shand 1). Indeed, my invention changed the insight of phrasing, sensation, range and power in jazz performances. The invention disregarded the need for a barnstorming voice and impressive range to achieve successful jazz performance. Miles Davis, Sinatra followed my rhythmic approach by adopting witty, highly musical phrasing. I also participated in nicknaming a jazz legend, Mr. Young as “Pres” which was unique in jazz development. My induction into the Hall of Fame is an affirmative approval of jazz development.

My contributions also impacted popular American music where many artists cite my influence in American music. For instance, I was among the first artists to maximize the singing capacity in a microphone (Layman 1).

I proved that a microphone has immense capacity to pick up nuances in an artist’s sound. Many modern American singers are now exploiting this opportunity. I have influenced American singers like Sinatra, Charles, James, and Simone. For instance, Sinatra mastered how I used the microphone and copied how I placed syllables around beats (Layman 1). Besides, my sassy buzz defines most popular American songs.

## Works Cited

*Billie Holiday* - Don't Explain (Live 1958)

Layman, WILL. “Still an Inspiration.”.

Shand, John. “Billie Holiday, gender-coding and the invention of sad jazz.” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 July 2016.