

**Baltimore Center Stage Introduces Baltimore's Own
Tanea Renee
As 'Billie Holiday' in
*Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill***



**WRITTEN BY LANIE ROBERTSON
MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS BY DANNY HOLGATE
DIRECTED BY NIKKOLE SALTER
MUSICAL DIRECTION BY NOLAN WILLIAMS, JR.
SEPTEMBER 14 – OCTOBER 8, 2023
Single tickets now on sale!**

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BALTIMORE, MD: Baltimore Center Stage (BCS) is pleased to announce that Baltimore's own **Tanea Renee*** will return to the stage this September as Billie Holiday in a new production of *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*. Directed by Pulitzer nominee **Nikkole Salter**, the show opens BCS' 2023/24 season starting September 14. The exclusive limited engagement runs through October 8; opening night for reviewing press is Friday, September 22 at 8PM. The show is sponsored by Miles & Stockbridge.

“As a proud Baltimorean, Tanea Renee has had a love of performance from a young age, which led her to a rich variety of roles across New York and regional stages,” notes Interim Artistic director **Ken-Matt Martin**. “It is such a thrill to welcome Tanea back to her hometown as the title character in Nikkole Salter’s incredible new production of *Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill*. I am certain that Baltimore audiences will cherish this local legend at Center Stage.”

In March 1959, four months before her passing, Billie Holiday gave an unforgettable performance at Emerson’s Bar & Grill in South Philadelphia. However, her songs are just one part of the show. In between renditions of some of her greatest hits, like “Strange Fruit” and “God Bless the Child,” Billie shares the triumphs and heartbreaks of a life and career like no other in this immersive cabaret experience that marks the directorial debut of Pulitzer nominated artist, Nikkole Salter.

Tanea Renee’s love of music began as a soloist in the children’s choir of her baptist church. On the heels of her high school graduation, she would go on to spend her freshman summer touring and singing as a gospel soloist in Rome, Italy. As a graduate of Towson University’s Acting Conservatory, Tanea was fortunate to perform the role of ‘Cordelia’ in Shakespear’s *King Lear* alongside fellow alumni/director Charles S. Dutton. She was excited to launch her professional career soon after her move to New York City in local stage plays and regional musicals such as *Little Shop of Horrors* (Ronnelle), *Smokey Joe’s Cafe* (Brenda), and *The Beat Goes On*, a 70’s musical review. Tanea would go on to expand into television by way of a day player on *The Chappelle Show* (Rick James, Charlie Murphy) and a contestant on *The Ultimate Coyote Ugly Search Season 3* (CMT).

Before moving on to perform in the National Tour of *Smokey Joe’s Cafe* (swing BJ/Pattie), Tanea spent an exhilarating year performing with a pioneering female theater company 1+1=ONE, which afforded her the rare opportunity to hone her skills through original plays and one woman shows around the city and surrounding boroughs. Tanea has spent some of her downtime away from the acting stage singing in New York City bands like Starlight Orchestra and relishing her other passion, private coaching kids in children’s theater. In addition, Tanea has also had the honor of sharing her performance knowledge with other budding artists as a musical theater judge for NAACP ACT-SO achievement program.

Currently, Tanea Renee is whole-heartedly enjoying her time as the musical director of the Sunbeams Children’s Choir in Baltimore, Maryland. She is also looking forward to curating/producing her first Christmas concert, a children’s book, and recreating the annual *Everyday Christmas Project*.

Tanea will be joined onstage by a band of local musicians, including Terry Brewer as the bandleader “Jimmy” on piano, Eliot Seppa on bass and guitar, and Francis Carroll on percussion. Baltimore School for the Arts alum Brittani Arlandis Green will understudy the role of Billie Holiday.

The creative and production team for *Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar and Grill* includes Nikkole Salter (Director), Nolan Williams, Jr. (Musical Director), Sydney Lynne (Scenic Designer), Moyenda Kulemeka (Costumer Designer), Jorge Arroyo (Lighting Designer), UptownWorks (Sound Designer), Kacey Bradshaw* (Stage Manager), and Alexis E. Davis (Assistant Stage Manager). Casting is by JZ Casting/Geoff Josselson, CSA and Katja Zarolinski, CSA.

***Member of Actors’ Equity Association**

Single tickets are currently on sale by visiting centerstage.org or calling 410.332.0033. Patrons can also visit the box office, located at 700 North Calvert Street.

Masks are optional except during performances on Wednesday and on Saturday matinees. For the most up to date COVID Safety Guidelines, visit our website: <https://www.centerstage.org/visit/covid-19-response/>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BCS:

www.centerstage.org

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About Baltimore Center Stage

Designated the State Theater of Maryland in 1978, Baltimore Center Stage provides the highest quality theater and programming for all members of our communities, including youth and families, under the leadership of Interim Artistic Director Ken-Matt Martin and Managing Director Adam Frank. Baltimore Center Stage ignites conversations and imaginations by producing an eclectic season of professional productions across two mainstages, through engaging community programs, and with inspiring education programs. Everything we do at Baltimore Center Stage is led by our core values—chief among them being Access For All. Our mission is heavily rooted in providing active and open accessibility for everyone, regardless of any and all barriers, to our Mainstage performances, education initiatives, and community programming.