

Billie Holiday – Lady in Satin (1958)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 14 April 2010 12:59 - Last Updated Tuesday, 29 July 2014 12:42

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01. *I'm A Fool To Want You*
02. *For Heaven's Sake*
03. *You Don't Know What Love Is*
04. *I Get Along Without You Very Well*
05. *For All We Know*
06. *Violets For Your Furs*
07. *You've Changed*
08. *It's Easy To Remember*
09. *But Beautiful*
10. *Glad To Be Unhappy*
11. *I'll Be Around*
12. *The End Of A Love Affair*

Personnel: Billie Holiday, vocal Ray Ellis, arranger and conductor George Ockner, violin and concertmaster David Soyer, cello Janet Putnam, harp Danny Bank, flute Phil Bodner, flute Romeo Penque, flute Mel Davis, trumpet J.J. Johnson, trombone Urbie Green, trombone Tom Mitchell, trombone Mal Waldron, piano Barry Galbraith, guitar Milt Hinton, bass Osie Johnson, drums Elise Bretton, backing vocals Miriam Workman, backing vocals

A harrowing classic, Billie Holiday's personal favorite among her '50s albums captures the singer 17 months before her death, her once honeyed voice, scarred and weakened from punishing life, its ravages highlighted by the 1958 session's crisp sonics and the contrasting "satin" of Ray Ellis' sleek string arrangements. Yet it is that very contrast that explains the power of these performances: In revisiting its torchy standards, Holiday reduces them to their core of pain and longing, transforming "I'm a Fool to Want You," "You Don't Know What Love Is," and "You've Changed" into naked declarations as mesmerizing and unsettling as a horrific accident. Any postrocker that presumes pop standards and string sections automatically translate to "easy listening" hasn't listened to this. This 1997 version adds unreleased takes and a beautiful 20-bit digital transfer to extract every shivering pang of Holiday's music. ---Sam Sutherland,

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