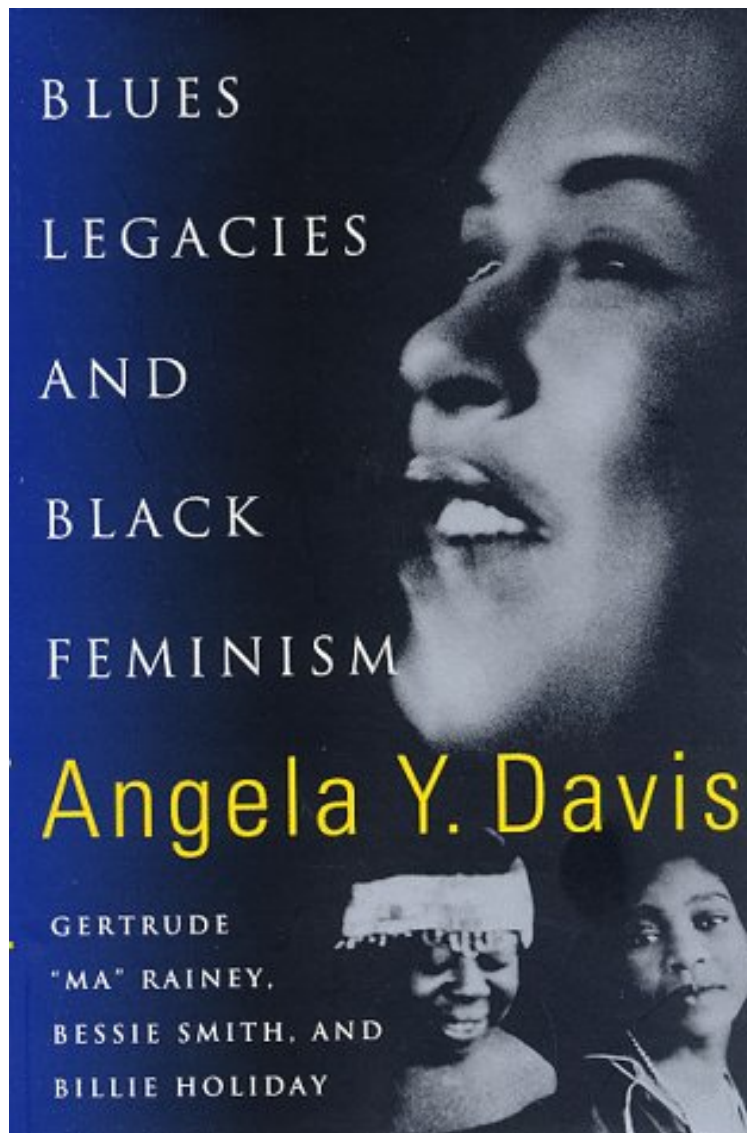


(Download) Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday

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Angela Y. Davis

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Angela Y. Davis : Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The best insight of blues womenBy CustomerAngela Davis1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. READ IT!By Ashley O'Brienthis is such a cool book. I loved learning

about African American feminism in the context of American History, and more importantly: music. I wish they made such thorough and exciting books for every genre of American music, but this history is unique and definitely worth the read. Bought it for a class and read the entire thing before any assignments were due on it. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I enjoyed this book. By Reader I was writing a paper for a grad class on blues women using Ann Petry's *The Street* as a main source, and this book came in handy. Davis gives us some really good insight into the worlds of blueswomen. When I get settled, I will reread this so that I can catch everything I may have missed first time around.

The author of "Women, Race and Class" suggests that "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday represent a black working-class, feminist ideology and historical consciousness. Davis' illuminating analysis of the songs performed by these artists provides readers with a compelling and transformative understanding of their musical and social contributions and of their relation to both the African-American community and American culture of photos Online promos .

.com The female blues singers of the 1920s, Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, and Bessie Smith, not only invented a musical genre, but they also became models of how African American women could become economically independent in a culture that had not previously allowed it. Both Smith and Rainey composed, arranged, and managed their own road bands. Angela Y. Davis's study emphasizes the impact that these singers, and later Billie Holiday, had on the poor and working-class communities from which they came. The artists addressed radical subjects such as physical and economic abuse, race relations, and female sexual power, including lesbianism. Ma Rainey was well known as a lover of women as well as men, and her song "Prove It on Me" describes a butch woman who dresses like a man and dates women. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* places the fluid sexuality of these women within a larger context of African American artists' attempts to subvert and recreate America. From Publishers Weekly In her provocative book, Davis, the well-known sixties radical, professor and author (*Women, Culture, and Politics*; *Women, Race, and Class*) finds, in the work of three pivotal artists of the blues and jazz era, "rich terrain for examining a historical feminist consciousness that reflected the lives of working-class black communities." Through her close readings of their lyrics, which she transcribed (and presents as the book's second half), Davis explores the meanings behind the performances of Gertrude "Ma" Rainey and Bessie Smith. Toppling the prevailing image of the tragic blues woman, she finds that the songs don't portray the desolate and deserted woman; rather, "the most frequent stance assumed by the women in these songs is independence and assertiveness?indeed defiance?bordering on and sometimes erupting into violence." She also offers ample evidence to dispute claims that women's blues were personal, not political, arguing that their songs created consciousness by naming the issues. Her readings of Billie Holiday's lyrics are less successful, perhaps because it is difficult to capture in words Holiday's subversive renderings of popular love songs. Still, Davis's book should be read by both scholars and music aficionados for its expressive reading of these singers' complex works. 8 pages of bw photos. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal In this fascinating exploration, feminist scholar and social historian Davis reveals how these women defied the dominant culture by incorporating a critical social consciousness into their music. Rainey established the blues as women's music, and Smith was the most successful blues singer of her time. Davis shows how their songs expressed independence and assertiveness, challenged ideas of gender-based inferiority, and covered topics such as domestic abuse, prostitution, work, and jail in such a way as to create a social history of African Americans. Davis sees these women's expression of these issues as a precursor to the feminist consciousness-raising found several decades later. While Holiday was not primarily a blues singer, Davis examines the social implications of her ability to transform inconsequential love songs into complex emotional explorations. This engaging book is of profound interest to all music, women's studies, and African American history collections. Highly recommended. Michael Colby, Univ. of California Libs., Davis Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.