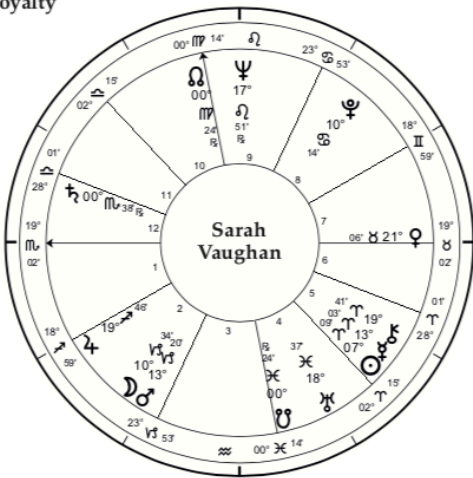
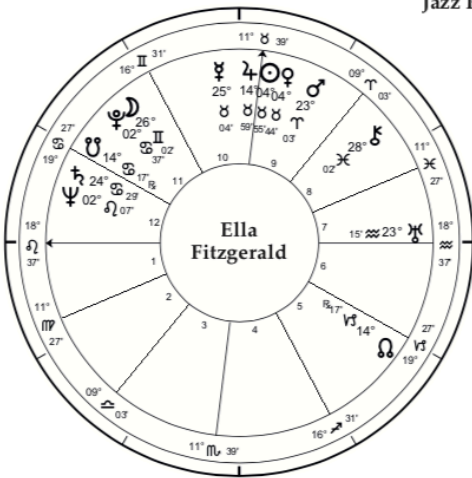


Jazz Royalty



'I know that deep blue sea Will soon be calling me'

Fernanda Paiva

It was some time ago that I started sensing the powerful Neptunian signature in Billie Holiday's horoscope. I had always loved her music and my natal Venus square Neptune could easily resonate with it; listening to her tunes while having a bath allowed me to express the Neptunian aspect of my own psyche.

I also remember the live versions of her songs being my least favourite in my early twenties because I could never sing along. Contrary to most of the singers I enjoyed listening to, Billie Holiday would always interpret her songs differently live than when in the studio. From one concert to another it seemed like she was giving birth to a new tune. I could never keep up with the rhythm, and that used to bother me. I don't think I had the emotional awareness at that time to feel her performances deeply.

Singing entered Billie Holiday's life in a very authentic way. Never rehearsing and without almost any influence from other singers (being unable to afford the luxury of having a record player in her youth), Billie Holiday based her technique on feelings. There were songs she couldn't personally relate to and would refuse to sing a single note of them, and there were songs that seemed made for her.

In her autobiography, *Lady Sings the Blues*, Billie talks about her approach as a song stylist: 'If you find a tune and it's got something to do with you, you don't have to evolve anything. You just feel it, and when you sing it other people can feel something too. With me, it's got nothing to do with working or arranging or rehearsing. Give me a song I can feel, and it's never work.'

Each planet in the horoscope represents a different drive coexisting in our psyche. Billie had many of those driving forces either in Pisces, aspecting Neptune or falling in the 12th House – giving rise to a very powerful Neptunian signature. The singer's stellium in Pisces is in the house that governs resources and talents (the

2nd), and some of the planets (Mars and Mercury) make an almost exact trine to her MC (reputation) in Scorpio. There wasn't much separation between her professional and private lives: Billie's suffering was the raw material that she converted into music and she was famous for all the dramas in her personal life, problems with the law, drugs and abusive relationships.

In her book *The Astrology of Fate*, Liz Greene writes that a dominant theme in the horoscope is the 'spinal column of the chart' and reflective of a person's key life stories. The energies represented by the symbols aren't only 'potential seeds' but an intrinsic pattern that will be manifested somehow in life by the individual.

When we are faced with such a strong motif in the chart, as with Billie Holiday, that archetypal dimension will feature so powerfully that perhaps the person's individual choice is somehow reduced from within. The outside factors also have an influence upon how prepared the individual can be to work with the energies given and reflected by the heavens. Billie Holiday was born to a thirteen-year old mother in a poor financial situation and in a society stricken by racial prejudice; she experienced much turmoil from an early age.

Neptune represents the dissolution of boundaries and, to a certain extent, so does Pisces. Pisces is about channelling creative energy and transcending the limits of mundane life in some way. Liz Greene refers to it as 'creative madness'. Other Piscean traits include the inherent capacity for empathy, great sensitivity, the melting down of barriers, and the potential to go beyond one's ego and separateness into a state of union with the whole.

We can imagine Billie's stellium as a kind of driving force that could have taken her closer to actualizing the purpose of her Sun in Aries – a pioneer of some kind. But perhaps Billie Holiday's fate was to carry the Neptunian archetype and Piscean myth – not only in her personal life, but also for the collective. That is possibly the main reason why her talent was so promptly and vastly recognized. The realness and intensity with which she performed could melt the space between her and the audience, and her voice powerfully expressed this archetypal energy through her music.