Purple Phoenix Productions presents
LADY DAY AND THE BLUES
A Salute to the Billie Holiday Songbook
February 8, 2015 – 2:30 p.m.
UPAC Auditorium, Bellevue, WA

Purple Phoenix Productions will present LADY DAY AND THE BLUE: The Billie Holiday Songbook at the UPAC Auditorium in Bellevue, WA at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday February 8, 2015. This concert is performed by popular vocalist/entertainer Stacie Calkins, accompanied by a live 5-piece jazz ensemble.

The tribute will include songs that Ms. Holiday enjoyed great success with: “Lover Man (Where Can You Be)”, “I Cover The Waterfront”, “What A Little Moonlight Can Do”, “Them There Eyes”, “I Cried For You”, “You’ve Changed” and “Good Morning Heartache”. While known as a vocalist, Holiday was also a prolific songwriter and poet, and the concert features many songs written by her, including “Lady Sings The Blues”, “Tell Me More and More and Then Some”, “Fine And Mellow”, “Billie’s Blues (I Love My Man)”, “Don’t Explain” and the legendary “God Bless The Child”.

Billie Holiday is considered one of the iconic jazz vocalists of all time. Influenced by the jazz instrumentalists of the 1930’s and ‘40’s, she pioneered a new way of manipulating vocal phrasing. Most jazz aficionados consider that she changed the sound of popular singing forever.

Also included in the concert will be the controversial classic “Strange Fruit” which Holiday recorded in 1939. The lyrics were originally a poem written by a Jewish poet in New York, who later set it to music. When it was brought to Billie’s attention, she initially resisted singing it because it reminded her or her father’s death. When she finally decided to sing it, her record label didn’t want her to record it because of the serious political nature of the song – a vivid description of the aftermath of a lynching. Eventually she got a release to record it elsewhere. Even though many radio stations refused to play it, it became a cult classic and she included it in her nightclub and concert repertoire for the remainder of her career.

Born Eleanora Fagan McKay, Billie Holiday was nicknamed “Lady Day” by her friend and frequent clarinet/saxophone player Lester Young. As described in her book LADY SINGS THE BLUES, (and as seen in the film of the same title), Holiday had a troubled childhood – born to a 13-year-old mother and growing up in and around brothels, and achieved success as a vocalist having failed to get any jobs as a nightclub dancer. After spending time touring as a band singer, her recordings began to get radio play and her unique vocal style brought her national recognition as one of the finest singers of her day. As her popularity grew, so did her addictions to drugs and alcohol. Arrested several times for possession of narcotics, and having varied success with sobriety, Holiday died in 1959 at the age of 44.
Ms. Calkins is a highly respected and gifted vocalist known primarily for her musical theatre work in shows playing leading roles in DREAMGIRLS, AIDA, RAGTIME, AIN’T MISBEHAVIN’, HAIR, ROCK AND ROLL TWELFTH NIGHT and SOME ENCHANTED EVENING as well as featured roles in BIG RIVER, THE BEST LITTLE WHOREHOUSE IN TEXAS, LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS among others. She has appeared in the Purple Phoenix Songbook tributes to Aretha Franklin, Lena Horne and will appear in their upcoming salute to the songs of Burt Bacharach and Hal David. She has twice been nominated for Best Actress In A Musical by Broadway.com – winning in 2013. Her voice has been described as “rich and resounding – the kind which melts your heart”. “[She] inhabits the stage the way Billie Holiday and Bessie Smith inhabited nightclubs in their heydays”

The UPAC Auditorium is inside the Unity Of Bellevue building at 16330 N.E. 4th Street, Bellevue, WA 98008. Tickets bought in advanced are $25 for general/senior/students and can be purchased on line at www.brownpapertickets. At the door tickets are $30 for general/senior and $25 students. For further information, contact Purple Phoenix Productions at (206) 799-6914.