

# Ma Rainey

Leib, Sandra (1981). *Mother of the Blues*.

As far as I'm aware, Leib's book is the only full-length biography of Ma Rainey, and a great starting point to learn about her life and her role in the history of blues.

Wintz, Cary D. and Paul Finkelman, eds. (2004). *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance*.

This book includes a good entry of Ma, with suggestions for further reading.

Davis, Angela Y. (1995). "I Used to Be your Sweet Mama: Ideology, sexuality and domesticity in the Blues of Gertrude 'Ma' Rainey and Bessie Smith". In Elizabeth Grosz and Elspeth Probyn eds., *Sexy Bodies: The Strange Carnalities of Feminism*.

Kasik, Mary E. (2016). *Performance and sexuality during the Harlem Renaissance: Gladys Bentley and Ma Rainey*.

Shannon, Sandra G. (1991). "The Long Wait: August Wilson's Ma Rainey's Black Bottom", *Black American Literature Forum* Vol. 25 No. 1.

Shafer, Yvonne (1998). *August Wilson: a research and production sourcebook*.

Shafer, Yvonne (1989). "An Interview with August Wilson", *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*.

Sulaiman, Nahidh F. (2012). "The Blues and African American Cultural Identity: A Study of August Wilson's Ma Rainey's Black Bottom", *Sarjana* Vol. 27 No. 1.

Shannon, Sandra G. (1995). *The Dramatic Vision of August Wilson*.

As well as including discussions of his work, this book ends with an extensive interview with Wilson himself.

Rich, Frank (1984). "Theater: 'Ma Rainey's Black Bottom'", *New York Times*.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1984/04/11/arts/theater-ma-rainey-s-black-bottom.html>

A review of the first Broadway production of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*.

Samuels Gibbs, Adrienne (2020). "Viola Davis on Playing the Powerful Ma Rainey: 'She Was Unapologetic In Her Sexuality'", *Zora*.

*Ma Rainey's Black Bottom: A Legacy Brought to Screen* (2020).

Behind-the-scenes documentary on the making of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, featuring interviews with the cast and crew.

*Viola Davis: The 60 Minutes Interview* (2020).

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wamHj6w2Mo&ab\\_channel=60Minutes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2wamHj6w2Mo&ab_channel=60Minutes)

*Hosking, Taylor* (2020). "Netflix's 'Ma Rainey's Black Bottom' features a Black queer icon. But it doesn't do her justice", *The Lily*.

<https://www.thelily.com/netfixs-ma-raineys-black-bottom-features-a-black-queer-icon-but-it-doesnt-do-her-justice/>

This article critiques the representation of queerness in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*.

Ovenden, Olivia (2020). "The True Story of 'Ma Rainey's Black Bottom' and the Legacy of the Radical 'Mother of the Blues'", *Esquire*.

<https://www.esquire.com/uk/culture/a34422255/ma-rainey-true-story/>

This is one of the recent articles I referred to which frames Ma's queerness as unique for its time, without the broader context of queerness in blues.

Women's Health Editors (2020). "*Ma's Raine's [sic] Bisexuality Was A Revolutionary Act In The 1920s That Still Matters Today*", *Women's Health Mag*.

<https://www.womenshealthmag.com/life/a35014028/ma-rainey-bisexual-netflix/>

A second article framing Ma's queerness as unique for its time.

Rainey, Ma (1928). *Prove It On Me Blues*.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRyaUcVfhak&ab\\_channel=novonine](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRyaUcVfhak&ab_channel=novonine)

Ma's most famously queer song.

Rainey, Ma (1924). *Lost Wandering Blues*.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9D6LguTC-A&ab\\_channel=JuanFecit](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9D6LguTC-A&ab_channel=JuanFecit)

The example we played of Ma's folk-style blues.

Rainey, Ma (1924). *See See Rider Blues*.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOTTYTgv22k&ab\\_channel=TravelerIntoTheBlue](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOTTYTgv22k&ab_channel=TravelerIntoTheBlue)

The example we played of Ma's classic-style blues.