

For Release on October 15, 2015

**NIGHTBIRD—EVA CASSIDY'S 'COMPLETE BLUES ALLEY'  
20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION ARRIVES  
DECEMBER 11 IN THE U.S. FROM BLIX STREET RECORDS**

**RE-MASTERED TWO-CD SET FEATURES 12 PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED  
RECORDINGS, INCLUDING 8 NEVER-BEFORE-HEARD SONGS  
PERFORMED BY THE LATE SINGER**



**ONE NIGHT, ONE TAKE (JANUARY 3, 1996)**

***“She possessed a silken soprano voice with a wide and seemingly effortless range, unerring pitch and a gift for phrasing that at times was heart-stoppingly eloquent.” --The New York Times***

Eva Cassidy, the late singer whose signature version of “Over the Rainbow” underscored the *In Memoriam* portion of the 2015 Emmy broadcast, is remembered in **NIGHTBIRD**—a two-CD set that affords everyone the opportunity to experience Eva’s *tour de force* performance at the Blues Alley jazz club in Washington, D.C. on January 3, 1996. Arriving on **December 11**, the double CD version will be followed several weeks later by the release of a four-LP gatefold heavyweight vinyl album.

The Blues Alley performances were recorded for what was to become the only solo Eva Cassidy album released during her lifetime. The original LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY album (first released locally in D.C. during the spring of 1996) only included 12 of the 31 songs recorded that night.

20 years later, the remastered **NIGHTBIRD** includes all 31 songs she performed that night, among them 12 previously unreleased recordings and 8 never-before-heard songs performed by the late singer. Eva’s wide musical range is showcased in songs such as “Nightbird,” “Blue Skies,” “Son Of A Preacher Man,” “Route 66,” “Late In The Evening,” “Baby I Love You” and “Caravan.”

Blix Street's UK label is releasing **NIGHTBIRD** as a limited edition 2-CD plus bonus DVD package, as well as a 4-LP gatefold heavyweight vinyl package that also includes the 2-CD and DVD package on November 13. The accompanying *PAL-format* DVD will contain 12 video performances recorded during the Blues Alley concert.

After cashing in a small pension from her job at a tree nursery to pay for the recording of the Blues Alley appearance, Eva and her band—bassist Chris Biondo, pianist Lenny Williams, lead guitarist Keith Grimes and drummer Raice McLeod—took to the Blues Alley stage with modest hopes.

“We thought we’d get airplay and sell a thousand copies so Eva could put some money toward a PA system,” explains Biondo in the upcoming documentary, *One Night That Changed Everything* that celebrates the Blues Alley 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. (NOTE: In the film by British television director Attracta McLaughlin, Eva’s band revisits the Blues Alley venue to view video performances from the night with then and now perspectives).

Nobody imagined that the audio and video recordings captured that night would prove to be the foundation of Eva Cassidy’s unparalleled posthumous international success. Many of Eva’s included signature interpretations recorded that night have become fan-favorites, including “Fields Of Gold,” “People Get Ready,” “Ain’t No Sunshine,” “What A Wonderful World” and “Autumn Leaves.”

Blues Alley footage of Eva performing “Over The Rainbow” propelled Eva’s *SONGBIRD* album to the top of the UK album chart in 2001, after it was broadcast (and re-broadcast following a wave of phone calls, emails and letters from viewers) on *Top of the Pops2* on BBC2. The UK chart-topper fueled a feeding frenzy within the U.S. media, including a half hour piece on *ABC News Nightline* that was rebroadcast three additional times in the ensuing years.

By the end of 2001, *SONGBIRD* had been certified triple-platinum in England (for sales of more than 900,000) and Gold in the U.S. (more than 500,000 units); the album, now six times platinum in England and platinum in the U.S., eventually hit No. 1 on *Billboard’s* Internet Albums chart and topped the publication’s Pop Catalog survey for 32 weeks.

Subsequent releases include: *TIME AFTER TIME* (2000); two additional U.K. chart toppers, *IMAGINE* (2002) and *AMERICAN TUNE* (2003)—in the U.S., the former climbed to No. 1 on *Billboard’s* Independent Albums survey, the latter to No. 5—the 2004 compilation *WONDERFUL WORLD; SOMEWHERE* (2008); *SIMPLY EVA* (2011), an album of alternative Eva-only guitar and vocal performances; and *THE BEST OF EVA CASSIDY*, in 2012. Now comes **NIGHTBIRD**, the complete Blues Alley album, which includes all 31 songs recorded on the night of January 3, 1996.

The **NIGHTBIRD** album concludes with Eva’s studio recording of “Oh, Had I A Golden Thread,” also a bonus track on the original *LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY* album. On first listen to the Blues Alley recordings Eva was disappointed. She had been suffering from a cold and thought her singing below par. Fortunately for music lovers everywhere, once she heard the final mixes, Eva was persuaded by her band-mates to allow the original *LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY* album to be released—with one condition—that the album end with “Oh, Had I A Golden Thread,” a performance she was particularly proud of.

The night of January 3, 1996 proved to be the high point of Eva Cassidy's tragically short career as a performer... and the beginning of her legendary posthumous career as a recording artist. Within 10 months of Blues Alley she was gone, having been diagnosed with melanoma by mid-year.

Bill Straw, president of Eva's posthumous label, independent Blix Street Records, heard the original LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY album in late September of 1996, shortly before Eva died. "By the time I finished listening to the album, I had heard one of the best singers ever," he recalls. "I knew she was going to be famous, but also knew she would not live to enjoy it. I drove around listening to Eva's music for months before finally contacting her parents about marketing their daughter's music."

A year following Cassidy's untimely passing, Blix Street (then in LA, now in the Seattle area) entered into an agreement with her parents Hugh and Barbara Cassidy to compile and market the singer's catalogue. In 1998, Blix Street initially released SONGBIRD (a collection of tracks from the original LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY and the EVA BY HEART studio albums, plus "Over the Rainbow" from the 1992 THE OTHER SIDE duet album with Chuck Brown). Later that year, Blix Street re-issued LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY and EVA BY HEART, which had been released locally by Eva's parents in late 1997, a year following Eva's passing.

SONGBIRD received immediate critical acclaim in various markets around the world. Sales grew steadily in the U.S., U.K. and Australia, but it took almost three years to reach a tipping point. In December, 2000, NPR included an Eva Cassidy segment on the *Morning Edition* radio program in America (and within minutes five Eva Cassidy albums soared to the top 5 positions of the Amazon US Pop Chart) and the *Top of the Pops2* television program in England aired Eva's "Over the Rainbow" performance video from Blues Alley, sending SONGBIRD to the top of the British album charts in March, 2001.

Compiling the 31 Blues Alley performances into one **NIGHTBIRD** album was a daunting task for Straw. "I have had the privilege of compiling eight Eva Cassidy albums, beginning with SONGBIRD. In each instance, the luxury of Eva's considerable catalogue, from various sources, served the basic premise that *less is more*. The challenge of an album containing 31 tracks is the polar opposite...would *more* be *less*? Fortunately, more turned out to be *much more*. The first listening to all 31 tracks in one sitting was an inspiring experience. Beginning at Capitol Records in the late 60's, I had heard out-takes from the best of the best...but had never before heard anything that approached the sheer consistent vocal excellence of these 31 one-take, all on one night, performances."

\* \* \* \* \*

Eva Cassidy performs "Nightbird," the title track of the new album, during the Blues Alley concert on January 3, 1996.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-X1g-aEeNc>

**NIGHTBIRD**, the 'Complete Blues Alley' 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Collection will be released on December 11 on Blix Street Records. The tracks are:

**Disc 1**

1. Blue Skies
2. Ain't Doin' Too Bad
3. Ain't No Sunshine
4. Fields of Gold
5. Baby I Love You
6. Honeysuckle Rose
7. Route 66
8. Bridge Over Troubled Water
9. Eva introduces the band
10. Chain Of Fools
11. Fever
12. Autumn Leaves
13. Fine And Mellow
14. Cheek To Cheek
15. Don't Mean A Thing
16. Late In The Evening
17. Next Time You See Me
18. Waly Waly

**Disc 2**

19. Take Me To The River
20. Nightbird
21. People Get Ready
22. The Letter
23. Son Of A Preacher Man
24. Stormy Monday
25. Tall Trees In Georgia
26. Something's Got A Hold Of Me
27. Time After Time
28. Over The Rainbow
29. You're Welcome To The Club
30. Caravan
31. You've Changed
32. What a Wonderful World
33. Oh Had I A Golden Thread

Pre-order at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

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