



For Release on January 17, 2023

Eva Cassidy: Like Never Before.....

**EVA CASSIDY'S IMPECCABLE VOICE RECEIVES UNIQUE SHOWCASE
BACKED BY RENOWNED LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WITH
ARRANGEMENTS FROM AWARD-WINNING COMPOSER CHRISTOPHER WILLIS**

**"I CAN ONLY BE ME" Album Release
Will Celebrate Late Singer's 60th Birthday**

"Tall Trees in Georgia" Digital Single Now Available

When singer Eva Cassidy wandered into producer Chris Biondo's studio in Glenn Dale, Maryland to sing on a band's demo, she began an unprecedented journey that would lead to more than 12 million albums sold worldwide, largely posthumously. When she passed away in 1996 from melanoma at the age of 33, she left behind a small catalogue of recorded material that has been painstakingly curated into more than a dozen individual collections that showcase her extraordinarily versatile voice and her wide-ranging, but unerringly tasteful, sense of material.

To celebrate what would have been her 60th birthday (on February 2), Blix Street Records will release a landmark new album, which pairs Cassidy's impeccable voice with the backing of the legendary London Symphony Orchestra. **I CAN ONLY BE ME**, the album's title track, is a reworking of a little-known song by Eva Cassidy's musical hero, Stevie Wonder, while the album's eight other tracks receive their own special reimagining. The album will be available digitally on **March 3, 2023**, with physical formats to arrive on **April 7, 2023**.

I CAN ONLY BE ME by Eva Cassidy with the London Symphony Orchestra is a new work that employs the groundbreaking audio restoration technology developed by filmmaker Peter Jackson for his 2021 *The Beatles: Get Back* film and used more recently for the re-issue of The Beatles classic album, *REVOLVER*. The process allows for splitting mono tracks into their separate vocal and instrumental parts. Hence, Cassidy's vocal parts were painstakingly separated and restored to reveal previously unheard levels of clarity and depth, resulting in an emotive, atmospheric album with lush arrangements created by award-winning composer/arranger Christopher Willis (*Schmigadoon!*, *Veep*, *Death of Stalin*, *The Personal History of David Copperfield*) accompanying now pristine vocals.

"Songbird," the first track on the new album, was released by Blix Street Records as a digital single in November of 2022, followed in the first week of 2023 by Buffy Sainte-Marie's emotive tale of love and loss, "Tall Trees in Georgia." Both are now available from iTunes, Spotify and other digital outlets.

"Tall Trees in Georgia" is one of Eva's most haunting performances," explains arranger Christopher Willis. "In the original live recording, the only accompaniment is Eva herself playing the guitar, lightly brushing the strings in a continuous tremolo. For the orchestral version, strings replace the guitar, and the overlapping sustains and tremolos become a texture of forest murmurs. To complete this picture, in between Eva's verses, I imagined two birds, represented by two high penny whistles up above the strings. While the narrator looks back on her life and laments the fact that 'the sweetest love I ever had I left aside,' the whistles/birds are heard calling to each other in the distance."

The release of the "Songbird" track coincided with the song's debut airing on BBC Radio2 in England. Back in 2001, it was the BBC playing Cassidy's rendition of "Over the Rainbow" that introduced her to British audiences and ignited a media storm on both sides of the Atlantic. Of the "Songbird" track, Willis commented: "The wonderful, resonant truth about this song is that Eva is the *Songbird*, singing naturally from the heart. No ego. The goal with the orchestral version was to complement her pure vocal essence with a simple, yet broader instrumental arrangement – a lush musical landscape with Eva's voice at the center."

View "Songbird" EPK here:
<https://youtu.be/4jF3TcpW-oU>

Listen to "Tall Trees in Georgia" by Eva Cassidy with
The London Symphony Orchestra:
<https://evacassidy.lnk.to/talltreesingeorgia>

The **I CAN ONLY BE ME** album was largely recorded in December of 2021 at LSO St. Lukes, the 18th century former Anglican London church that currently serves as the London Symphony Orchestra's home, conducted by Chris Egan. "Like everyone who listens to Eva's voice, I've felt like I've gotten to know her as I've worked on the album," explains Willis. "It's been a voyage of discovery for everyone involved. So many of Eva's existing recordings are admired for their simplicity. But as I went deeper into Eva's life story and catalogue, I came to understand the extent to which she herself had experimented in the studio and had been looking for new ways to record her songs. The most important thing has always been to listen closely to what she's doing and respond authentically."

Engineer Dan Weinberg, who handled the audio restoration, adds: "Eva's original vocals are basic live recordings with limited audio data for restoration, so we used a multi-stage process of machine learning, with delicate, almost forensic, editing of sounds—from cymbal bleed to the crockery noise of people eating dinner a few feet away from Eva (at the Blues Alley nightclub in Washington, DC where many of Cassidy's live performances were recorded). Many hours of rendering retained the quality and character of her performance, losing none of the magic."



London Symphony Orchestra recording session at LSO St. Luke's in December 2021 under the direction of Chris Egan

All album tracks are available in hi-res 48kHz/24bit stereo along with Dolby Atmos and Sony 360 immersive audio formats, a first for Eva Cassidy recordings.

“She seems to be thinking about the big questions when she’s singing,” adds Willis, “and orchestral arrangements have a tendency to dwell on that. The result is unavoidably transcendental, feeling Eva’s presence from beyond time and space. This effect wasn’t intentional; it happened on its own.”



Eva Cassidy's catalogue of recordings began that day in Chris Biondo's studio where he, impressed with her talent, asked her to come back so he could record her as a soloist, eventually introducing her to Washington's "King of Go-Go" Chuck Brown with whom she would make an album. That album would spawn her now iconic version of "Over the Rainbow," which has been compared to Judy Garland's as a definitive performance of that treasured American classic.

Eva worked in a plant nursery by day and played in local clubs around her native Washington, DC by night, developing a loyal following for her intensely personal, highly eclectic musical style. Unable to secure a record deal that didn't compromise her penchant for wide-ranging material, she cashed in a small pension to pay for the recording of her first album, *LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY*, in 1996. Nobody could have imagined that the audio and video recordings captured that night would prove to be the foundation of Eva Cassidy's posthumous superstardom.

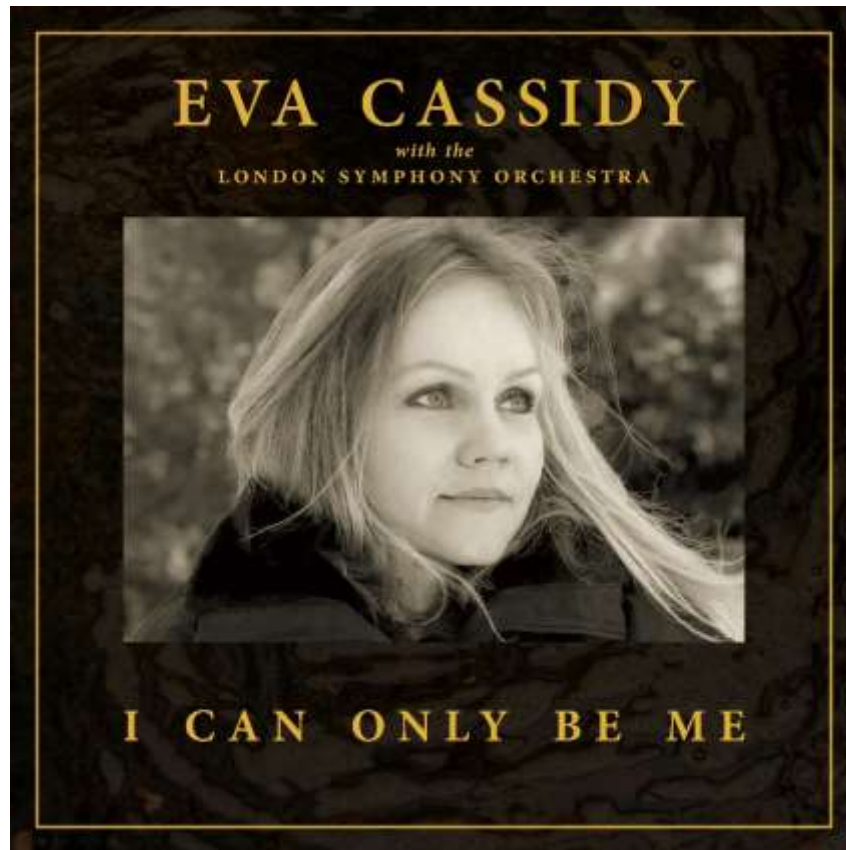
SONGBIRD, the first compilation curated from the Blues Alley recordings and others she made during her short lifetime, has been certified Platinum in the U.S. for sales of more than 1 million units, while in the UK, the album is 6x Platinum and spent a total of six months in the UK Top 10 (two weeks of those at Number 1). She later had two other #1 albums on the UK chart and is one of a handful of female artists to have achieved ten British Gold albums. *People Magazine* wrote of *SONGBIRD* at the time: "Whether in jazz, folk, or inspirational music, Cassidy's potential was huge, and this album stands as a testament to popular music's loss."

Her taste and the breadth of her material have continued to propel interest in her finite recorded work all these years later. Her versions of iconic songs have made their way into myriad films and television programs, among them *Maid in Manhattan*, *Smallville*, *CSI: Vegas*, *Dawson's Creek* and *This Is Us*. Writer/director Richard Curtis, who used Cassidy's rendition of "Songbird" in his romantic holiday film *Love, Actually*, said of the new album: "This album is a real act of alchemy - intimacy and grandeur in perfect partnership."

There has also been continuing use of her arrangements and recordings on television talent shows such as *The X Factor*, *The Voice*, *Masked Singer*, *American Idol*, *America's Got Talent* and *Dancing With The Stars*. Her guitar/vocal version of Cyndi Lauper's "Time After Time" served as the soundtrack for a recent Kay Jewelers' national advertising campaign while her unique interpretation of Sting's "Fields of Gold" urged the public to get vaccinated against Covid-19. Add to that the fact that artists ranging from Paul McCartney to Ozzy Osbourne to Adele have been quoted citing her as an influence and inspiration.

Two-time Emmy™-winning producer/arranger William Ross, who created the album's "Autumn Leaves" track, said: "I can't possibly find the words to adequately express my thoughts and feelings about Eva, one of the most unique, hypnotic, and powerful singers of all time. Her voice resonates through my whole being. I don't understand what she does to me...but I'm stunned by the experience. Those familiar with her have been changed forever."

Perhaps her hometown paper, the *Washington Post* said it best: "The saddest part of the mostly heartwarming story of singer Eva Cassidy is that she had to die to get the renown she deserved."



Track Listing:

- 1. Songbird**
- 2. Autumn Leaves**
- 3. People Get Ready**
- 4. Waly Waly**
- 5. Time After Time**
- 6. Tall Trees In Georgia**
- 7. Ain't No Sunshine**
- 8. You've Changed**
- 9. I Can Only Be Me**

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<http://evacassidy.org/>

<https://EvaCassidy.lnk.to/ICanOnlyBeMe>



**For music, photos and media information, contact:
Sharon Weisz, W3 Public Relations
323-934-2700 w3pr@yahoo.com
www.w3publicrelations.com**