

For Release on February 26, 2018

BLIX STREET RECORDS CELEBRATES 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF  
EVA CASSIDY'S MONUMENTAL 'SONGBIRD' ALBUM WITH  
RELEASE OF 'SONGBIRD20'

Re-Mastered Original CD Plus 4 Bonus Tracks Will Arrive in Stores On  
March 2 in UK and Australia, March 9 in U.S. and March 30 in Canada

Eva Cassidy's **SONGBIRD** album was initially released by independent label Blix Street Records in April, 1998. The posthumous release, an anthology of recordings by the Washington, DC-based singer who had died in November of 1996, is comprised of four tracks from her first solo album, *LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY* (taken from her January 3, 1996 performance with her band at the Georgetown jazz club and locally released a few months before she died); five tracks from *EVA BY HEART*, the studio album she was recording at the time of her passing, posthumously released locally a year after she died; and one track (*Over The Rainbow*) from *THE OTHER SIDE*, a 1992 collection of jazz and blues duets with Washington's Chuck Brown.

According to Blix Street's founder/president Bill Straw, the plan was to introduce the music of the then recently deceased/now legendary singer to the world via an album that would live on with early believers until the inevitable tipping point around the world. The title-**SONGBIRD**-was taken from Eva's included cover of the Christine McVie classic that has closed many a Fleetwood Mac concert. *LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY* and *EVA BY HEART* were both later released by Blix Street in the summer of 1998, the first national and international exposure for both works.

**SONGBIRD20**, set for release by Blix Street in the UK and Australia on March 2, the U.S. on March 9 and Canada on March 30, celebrates the 20th anniversary of the original **SONGBIRD**, an album 'heard round the world'...more than five million copies sold. **SONGBIRD20** contains the re-mastered original ten tracks (featuring Cassidy's masterful interpretations of *Fields of Gold*, *Autumn Leaves*, *Songbird* and *Over the Rainbow*) plus four acoustic bonus tracks (*Songbird*, *Wade in the Water*, *People Get Ready* and *Autumn Leaves*) that surfaced long after the release of **SONGBIRD**. They were first heard on the 2011 *SIMPLY EVA* album.

**SONGBIRD** originally arrived with immediate impact around the world. It began with *Fields of Gold* and ended with *Over the Rainbow*, tracks that people only had to hear once. In between were eight other classic performances that also showcased Eva Cassidy's extraordinarily versatile voice and exquisite taste: in choice of songs;

impeccable arrangements and her incredible ability to re-imagine a familiar song and make it her personal property. *People Magazine* wrote 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."

Two years later, as 2000 drew to a close, National Public Radio featured Eva Cassidy on its "Morning Edition" news program and, almost simultaneously over in England, a grainy video of Cassidy performing *Over the Rainbow* from the Blues Alley concert aired on the British television program *Top of the Pops 2* on BBC2, and it was re-broadcast in January, 2001 following a wave of phone calls, emails and letters from viewers. The rebroadcast catapulted the **SONGBIRD** album to the top of the UK and Irish album charts on March 18, 2001, igniting a media storm in the U.S. where outlets from *The Today Show* to *ABC World News Tonight* to *CNN* weighed in on the phenomenon that was Eva Cassidy. *ABC News Nightline* ran a full half hour piece that has been rebroadcast numerous times in the ensuing years, making it one of, if not the most popular program in the history of *Nightline*. The piece was anchored by ABC's on-air correspondent Dave Marash who had heard Eva music in Washington and would then listen to it at night while covering the war in Bosnia and other faraway places.

By November of 2001, the fifth anniversary of her passing, **SONGBIRD** had been certified: Triple Platinum in England for sales of more than 900,000; and Gold in the US for sales of more than 500,000, eventually hitting # 1 on *Billboard Magazine's* Internet Album Chart and topping the publication's Pop Catalog Chart for 32 weeks.

The small catalogue of material she left behind has been meticulously curated and released via 11 different albums. Subsequent Eva Cassidy releases include *TIME AFTER TIME* (2000), two additional U.K. chart toppers, *IMAGINE* (2002) and *AMERICAN TUNE* (2003)--the former climbed to #1 on *Billboard's* Independent Album Chart, the latter to No. 5), the 2004 compilation *WONDERFUL WORLD*, followed by *SOMEWHERE* in 2008 and 2011's *SIMPLY EVA*, an album of alternative Eva-only acoustic guitar and vocal performances. *THE BEST OF EVA CASSIDY* was released in 2012.

In 2015, Blix Street released *NIGHTBIRD*, the complete 31-song recording of Eva Cassidy's landmark Blues Alley concert. The two-CD set, containing 12 previously unreleased tracks, was remixed and remastered from the original tapes and also released in a double vinyl album version.

To date, Eva Cassidy has sold more 10 million records around the world—with half attributed to **SONGBIRD**. Six times Platinum in England, **SONGBIRD** passed the one million sales mark in the U.S. and was certified Platinum on November 14, 2008. Cassidy recently became one of only 11 female artists to ever achieve 10 or more UK Gold albums.

In recent years, Eva Cassidy has become the standard for a younger generation of female singers. Her influence is documented in *Eva Cassidy: Timeless Voice*, a 2013 television program. Adele has been quoted as saying: "So I used to dress up like a Slipknot fan, and then after school I'd run home and listen to Eva Cassidy."

Every year brings countless new uses of her music in films, television and beyond--from USA Ladies Figure Skating Champion Michelle Kwan skating to Eva's *Fields of Gold* during the closing ceremonies of the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City to the inclusion of her *Songbird* performance in the film *Love Actually* (2003) to a 2007 BBC poll ranking Eva Cassidy 21st on a list of "100 Voices of the 20th Century" to the *67th Annual Emmy Awards* using her signature version of *Over the Rainbow* to underscore the 2015 award show's *In Memoriam* tribute honoring the passing of major television industry figures during the prior year to the continuing use of her arrangements and recordings on talent shows such as *The XFactor*, *The Voice*, *American Idol*, *America's Got Talent* and *Dancing With The Stars*.

Born in Washington, DC, Cassidy grew up around music in Oxon Hill, Maryland (and in Bowie, Maryland after the age of nine). Her father, a special needs teacher, played bass and cello while her brother Dan played violin. She was encouraged to sing at home with her siblings from an early age, and by high school, she was in several bands.

Her catalogue of recordings began when she wandered into producer Chris Biondo's studio in Kensington, Maryland to sing on a band's demo to make extra money. Biondo, 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. In 1992, *THE OTHER SIDE*, a collection of Brown and Cassidy duets (plus her solo version of *Over the Rainbow*) was released by nationally Liaison Records.

Cassidy worked in a plant nursery by day to fulfill her desire to be close to nature 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 she was happy with, Cassidy cashed in a small pension from her job to pay for the recording of her first album, *LIVE AT BLUES ALLEY*, in 1996. She was

backed by her band – producer Chris Biondo on bass, pianist Lenny Williams, lead guitarist Keith Grimes and drummer Raice McLeod. Nobody could have imagined that the audio and video recordings captured that night would prove to be the foundation of Eva Cassidy’s unparalleled posthumous international success. Cassidy and Biondo were also at work on a studio album which would become *EVA BY HEART*. It was completed by Biondo and released locally by Liaison Records almost a year after Eva's death.

After she was diagnosed with melanoma at the age of 33, Blix Street recording artist Grace Griffith sent Eva’s music to her label’s president Bill Straw. Straw 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 whole album, I knew 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 her cassette in my car for months before contacting her parents about marketing their daughter’s music.”

Eva Cassidy’s voice caused a collective spontaneous reaction around the world that she did not live to witness. **SONGBIRD20** is a celebration of the anniversary of the release of the album that first made the world aware of one of the finest singers of her generation.

In these intervening 20 years since the release of **SONGBIRD**, Eva Cassidy’s music has proven timeless and universal. Crossing all boundaries—musical, cultural, geographical—her voice continues to find new listeners every day. “She sang for the pure joy of singing,” her mother, Barbara Cassidy, has said, “however, the spirit would move her.”