

Eva Cassidy – Live At Blues Alley (1997)

Written by bluesever

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01. *Cheek To Cheek*
02. *Stormy Monday*
03. *Bridge Over Troubled Water*
04. *Fine And Mellow*
05. *People Get Ready*
06. *Blue Skies*
07. *Tall Trees In Georgia*
08. *Fields of Gold*
09. *Autumn Leaves*
10. *Honeysuckle Rose*
11. *Take Me To The River*
12. *What A Wonderful World*
13. *Oh, Had I A Golden Thread*

Eva Cassidy (acoustic guitar, electric guitar); Keith Grimes (electric guitar); Lenny Williams (piano); Chris Biondo (bass guitar); Raice McLeod (drums).

The late Eva Cassidy gained a loyal following in the Washington, D.C., area through appearances in small clubs, utilizing her pitch-perfect singing voice to interpret a variety of tunes ranging from standards to modern-era pop songs. A notoriously shy performer, Eva Cassidy had a somewhat stiff stage presence, but she endeared herself to her audiences by performing songs she obviously loved, combining elements of soul, gospel, blues, and jazz. Live at Blues Alley is an excellent showcase for her vocal talents and her ability to make even the most familiar tune uniquely her own. Admittedly, the titles on Live at Blues Alley seem like a set list for a bad Vegas lounge act; songs such as Irving Berlin's "Cheek to Cheek" and Louis Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World" have been done to death for decades. Fortunately, Eva Cassidy had an obvious affection for these standards. She sounds as if she had a ball performing the Irving Berlin number, while her subtle reading of the Louis Armstrong tune is nothing less than extraordinary. She was equally successful with more contemporary pop classics like "Bridge Over Troubled Water" and "Take Me to the River." Ultimately, the slower

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songs are the most stirring, particularly her rendition of "Fields of Gold." Her tear-jerking version of the Sting tune could very well be one of the greatest cover songs ever recorded. Eva Cassidy's popularity slowly began to spread outside of the D.C. area upon the release of this album in early 1996. Unfortunately, Eva Cassidy passed away later that year, just as she began laying the groundwork for what could have been a stellar career in music. However, her posthumous success has been astonishing, with worldwide critical acclaim and extensive exposure on British television that helped her album *Songbird* climb to number one on the British album chart in March, 2001. *Live at Blues Alley* was the only solo album released during Eva Cassidy's lifetime (an album recorded with Chuck Brown, *The Other Side*, was also released), and it's an excellent introduction to a performer who never lived to witness the impact her voice made on her fans all over the world. ---William Cooper, Rovi

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