

## Patty Griffin – Silver Bell (2013)

Written by blueslover

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*01 – Little God 02 – Truth #2 03 – Boston 04 – Perfect White Girls 05 – Sooner Or Later 06 – What You Are 07 – Silver Bell 08 – Fragile 09 – Mother of God 10 – One More Girl 11 – Sorry and Sad 12 – Driving 13 – Top of the World 14 – So Long* Musicians: Patty Griffin - Guitar, Piano, Vocals Jay Joyce - Guitar, Producer Doug Lancio - Guitar John Deaderick - Keyboards Frank Swart – Bass Billy Beard – Drums Emmylou Harris - Vocals (Background)

Shelved during of the great record label consolidation of the early 2000s, Patty Griffin's Silver Bell is indeed a "lost album" but it is not one that carries mythic weight. Griffin rebounded relatively quickly after Silver Bell's abandoned release -- two years later, she signed with ATO and released 1000 Kisses, the first in a series of regular records all receiving greater acclaim and stronger sales -- and Silver Bell itself strengthened her reputation and bank account due to covers by the Dixie Chicks, who cut "Top of the World" and "Truth #2" on 2002's Home (over a decade later, Natalie Maines once again returned to this album for its title track, recording "Silver Bell" for her 2013 solo debut, Mother). If the Chicks' covers suggest that the album has a strong country flavor, that's not necessarily wrong, but there's a roiling rock undertow tempered by a smoky, late-night soulfulness that gives this album its emotional resonance. These sounds are not mutually exclusive. Often, Griffin blends it all together, pushing a song that starts as country into bracing, cathartic territory, a trick that is an outgrowth of Flaming Red. Despite the success the Dixie Chicks had with songs from this album, Silver Bell is not necessarily a record that would've brought Griffin to a larger audience. It is simultaneously inward and explosive, a record that demands close listening and certainly rewards the attention. Griffin may have gotten a little more accessible not much later, but it's hard to hear Silver Bell and not think of it as a compelling transitional LP that's the missing piece of the puzzle, the moment when Patty Griffin inadvertently learned that the hard road not only resulted in a rewarding journey, but it was the road she was destined to take. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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