

A Farewell to Grace

Grace Griffith was a singer's singer. Case in point: Eva Cassidy was one of her biggest fans. No wonder. A linchpin in the vibrant D.C. music scene heard 'round the world, Grace received more than a dozen **WAMMIES** from the Washington Area Music Association in the Celtic, Traditional Folk, and New Age categories, and was named their 2003 *Artist of the Year*.

Healer: a professional Physical Therapist with a pure healing voice that comforted all lucky enough to hear her.

Selfless: what other singer would have introduced Eva Cassidy's music to her new label just after the label had released her first album.

Courage: Grace endured the ravages of Parkinson's for 25 years. Her ability to play guitar was the first to leave. Her voice lived on for close to 20 years. As it, too, was abandoning her, Grace took up the Parkinson's cause, appearing as a guest speaker and performer at the 2006 World Parkinson's Congress in Washington, D.C., and at the second World Parkinson's Conference held in Glasgow, Scotland in 2010.

Passing Through turned out to be her final studio album - recorded over a two year period with the help of loving musician friends. Chris Biondo (Eva Cassidy's long time producer) opened his studio whenever Grace had the energy and inclination. The haunting result speaks for itself as Grace's final, crowning musical achievement. The tribute/launch concert at the Birchmere Music Hall in Alexandria, VA during the summer of 2014 proved to be her last public performance. I was there. Grace was in rare form for one more ride.

The last seven years have mostly been about courage in the face of merciless adversity. No more. The shining artist *who never thought about herself first* takes her rightful place among the stars. The healing spirit of Grace Griffith will shine on in the memories of those who heard her, as well as those destined to discover her healing musical legacy.

Bill Straw
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