

## Mp3 Sylvia - A Cradle In Bethlehem



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A Christmas classic featuring string arrangements, acoustic guitar, piano, violin, recorders, bodhran and Sylvia's fresh, embracing voice. 10 MP3 Songs in this album (35:34) ! Related styles: EASY LISTENING: Adult contemporary, POP: Folky Pop People who are interested in Trisha Yearwood Kathy Mattea Norah Jones should consider this download. Details: If you don't get a chill up your spine from the very first cut on this CD, forget it, exclaims Craig Bickhardt, well-known songwriter and producer. When Sylvia hit the high note at the end of 'O Holy Night,' to paraphrase Robert Frost - I knew I had taken an immortal wound. After six albums on RCA Records, two compilations on Renaissance and BMG Records and three records on the independent label Red Pony Records, Sylvia's musical horizons are expanding with the release of her first Christmas CD. "A Cradle In Bethlehem," on Red Pony Records, is the latest offering of Sylvia's 12-year collaboration with arranger and composer John Mock. The album opens with "Guided By A Star," Mock's prelude for the 12th century piece "O Come, O Come Emmanuel." Linda Thompson and David Foster's "My Grown-Up Christmas List" reminds us of the hope we can find in the innocence of our youth. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's classic poem "Christmas Bells" comes to life with new music composed and arranged by Mock. The title cut, "A Cradle In Bethlehem," features a 19-piece string orchestra of Nashville's finest musicians. The album also includes "O Holy Night," "Angels We Have Heard On High," "When Heaven's Calling You," "What Child Is This?" and "Silent Night." The CD concludes with the Bach/Gounod "Ave Maria." This piece presented my greatest challenge," says Sylvia regarding her first classical recording in liturgical Latin, "and it gave me a deep sense of accomplishment." During the 1980's, Sylvia recorded six albums beginning with Drifter, which produced her first Top 10 hit, Tumbleweed, her first Number One single "Drifter," and two other Top 10 hits. Her next release, "Just Sylvia," created quite a stir in the country music industry which was just beginning to

recognize successful female artists. "Nobody" was a giant hit record, Number One on Billboard's Top 100 Country chart, and reaching the No. 13 position on Billboard's Top 100 Pop chart. "Nobody" earned Gold Single status by the RIAA in both the U.S. and Canada for selling nearly 2 million singles. It was BMI's Song of the Year in 1983 for most radio airplay. "Just Sylvia" was also certified gold. Sylvia's chart success continued through the end of 1987 with a total of 13 Top 10 and Number One songs. She has sold over 4 million records. In 1982, Sylvia was the Academy of Country Music's Female Vocalist of the Year and in 1983, a Grammy nominee for Best Female Vocalist. Sylvia was the featured vocalist on James Galway's CD, "The Wayward Wind." Sylvia toured the U.S. and Canada extensively throughout the 1980's performing over 200 concerts per year. She was also highly visible nationally with popular music videos and appearances on numerous television shows, including The Today Show, Good Morning America, Dick Clark's American Bandstand, Austin City Limits, and The Country Music Awards. Sylvia hosted her own TV show, Holiday Gourmet, on TNN for two seasons. Sylvia has released three CD's on her own record label, Red Pony Records, The Real Story (1996), Where In The World (2002), and A Cradle In Bethlehem (2002). These CD's are available on the internet at [cdbaby.com/CD/sylvia2](http://cdbaby.com/CD/sylvia2) and at selected music stores. "Sylvia - A Cradle In Bethlehem" A review by Craig Bickhardt In an era of county music female belters and pop music divas who appear to consider every song an opportunity to exhibit the sheer strength of their vocal muscles, Sylvia's voice is like a gift from the gentle Muses themselves. No doubt if the Muses could really sing they would opt to give us something more genuine than the typical Christmas offerings we are numbed with each year. In that sense, A Cradle In Bethlehem is a taste of pure inspiration. If you don't get a chill up your spine from the very first cut on this CD, forget it. You probably have a Santa Claus beside your manger anyway. But for me, when Sylvia hit the high note at the end of O Holy Night it was as if, to paraphrase Robert Frost, I knew I had taken an immortal wound. From her Mid-western roots, Sylvia has drawn all of her earthier and plangent vocal qualities and mixed them with the sophistication of a Kathleen Battle, or a Keeley Smith. The results are simply stunning. Though her voice has matured over the years, it has never aged. The music on this CD ranges from the Celtic colorings of When Heaven's Calling You, to the newgrass interpretation of Angels We Have Heard On High, to the torchy rendition of My Grown-up Christmas Wish, to the classicism of Ave Maria. You might think that no one can cover this amount of territory successfully on one CD without more than a few embarrassing moments, but the mix here works beautifully thanks to this lady's abundant musical talents.

Sylvia's voice transcends genres more easily than any voice I can think of. She is a master at interpreting a lyric in such a way that it appears to be correctly interpreted for the very first time. We aren't talking about improvisation, but rather, the pure reading of a lyric that nuances the subtleties of the words, the honesty of the emotions, and even the poetry of the vowel sounds. And she appears to do it all as effortlessly as the best artists do their work. Listen to the precise engagement and release of her vibrato, and then see if you can find another pop singer, with the exception of Barbara Streisand, who has this kind of complete control over her instrument. Her pitch is dead-on naturally, and believe me, in the state of the art world of record making, very few singers go into the studio without an arsenal of digital pitch tuners. Attribute the success of this collection in part to John Mock's superbly understated arrangements and his versatile musicianship. As a result of the three CDs they have worked on together, Sylvia and John have developed a symbiotic relationship that is a rare collaboration in the musical world. It's the kind of chemistry that made Sinatra and Riddle, or Strayhorn and Ellington, or Les Paul and Mary Ford such a joy to listen to. Mock's beautifully shadowed string charts provide the perfect canvas for Sylvia's brush. His musical texturing compliments Sylvia's voice on every cut. Add to these elements the experience and tasteful guidance of veteran producer and former record label executive Jeff Teague, and you get a CD that deserves recognition and a very large audience. If, like me, your Christmas wishes include a CD that puts some new magic in the old holiday songs we know and love, A Cradle in Bethlehem is a gift that will not disappoint.

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