



# Atlanta Music Guide

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"if you know what's good for you" ...  
a regular look  
by kevin madigan

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**Patty Griffin** didn't burst on the scene. She sneaked up on it. Sly and melancholy, her presence so far has been too quiet, and her impact minimal. That could, and should, change.

[Griffin](#) has a new album out, [1000 Kisses](#) (ATO), and it's a beauty. Her tremulous voice, soft and bitter, is haunting, as are these songs of compromise and transcendence. The arrangements are sparse, using acoustic guitar, cello, accordion, vibes, piano, mandolin and little else. The lyrics tell of "finding dignity in the mundane and coming to terms with life after loss," as Griffin describes it. In 'Rain' she sings *I don't want to beg you baby / For something you could never give / I'm not looking for the rest of your life / I just want another chance to live*. But not all is woe and despair. Her version of an old Mexican folk song, 'Mil Besos,' sung in spirited Spanish, celebrates the joy of love in its purest form. She also does a nice job of **Bruce Springsteen's** 'Stolen Car' and handles the old **Lonnie Johnson** R&B hit 'Tomorrow Night' with considerable aplomb.

Having seen Griffin's live performance on several occasions, I urge you to catch her at the Variety Playhouse on May 8th.

Once in a while, Georgia State's [Album 88](#) comes up with something surprising, as it did the other day by playing something I actually liked: [The Gloria Record](#) is a fine band from the Midwest that deserves to be heard, even though no local record shops appear to be carrying their *Start Here* album and their label doesn't bother responding to e-mail.

[Coat of Many Cupboards](#) is the title of the just-released **XTC** box set, which covers their best period, from 1978 to 1989. The quality is excellent and 70% of the contents have never before seen the light of day. Even the "hits" are alternate versions. [Astralwerks](#) will also re-release the band's first ten albums in remastered form, beginning in May with *Skylarking*, *Oranges & Lemons* and *White Music*. As if that weren't enough, the label has put out a second collection of the *Rarewerks* series (called II, cleverly) that has more beats than you can shake a stick at. It features **The Chemical Brothers**, **Fatboy Slim**, **The Beta Band**, **Air**, **Dimitri From Paris**, **Doves** and **Beth Orton**. These last two have albums of their own coming soon as well, which in itself is cause to celebrate, if you're that way inclined.

Another label that does collections well is Hear Music, whose *Waking (Volume 7)* features the likes of **David Byrne**, **Joe Strummer & The Mescaleros**, **Bill Frisell**, **Sam Phillips**, **Alejandro Escovedo** and the great **Rufus Wainwright**, who is playing a show at Earthlink Live on April 28th. It's all good...

This column will attempt to gather some discerning information about what goes on in Atlanta, musically speaking. It will separate the wheat from the chaff, so to speak, and will do so on a regular basis. There will also be coverage of related topics and events, as well as a rundown of worthy new releases.

Until next time...