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Patty Smyth's new holiday album raising money for veterans

December 11, 2015

6:04 PM MST

In 1984, Patty Smyth's band [Scandal](#) had a #1 hit with "[The Warrior](#)," and now the singer is helping America's warriors with proceeds from her recently released Christmas album. "[Come On December](#)" was released November 20, after a nearly month-long campaign on PledgeMusic to raise funds and awareness for [Headstrong](#), an organization that provides cost-free, stigma-free, and bureaucracy-free mental healthcare to military veterans.

*Valarie Bienas*

The 8 songs on the album include classics such as "Winter Wonderland," "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," and "Auld Lang Syne," as well as 3 original songs that she co-wrote with longtime collaborator and Scandal bandmate [Keith Mack](#): "[Broken](#)," "[Come on December](#)," and "[Walk With Me](#)."

"I've been wanting to do a Christmas album for a long time, but I kept procrastinating," the rock legend told the Examiner.com. "I just wanted it stripped down — I can't take those Christmas records where everyone's trying to reinvent the wheel and come up with some crazy, quirky way to do it."

She and Mack carefully chose a selection of standards that fit the mood they wanted to create with

the album and that complemented the 3 songs they wrote for it. "Do You Hear What I Hear?" was a spontaneous pick that Smyth suggested during their sessions. Mack had never heard it before, so they Googled it for him to learn and "we cut it within 30 minutes of me suggesting it to him. I knew most of the words, but I didn't know them all. I was singing off of a lyric sheet on that one. It was the very last song we did," she recalled.

"Auld Lang Syne" was a favorite of her grandfather, who was from Scotland. "He loved that song so much and he said that it's Scottish, not Irish, so I sang that as an homage to him," Smyth said.

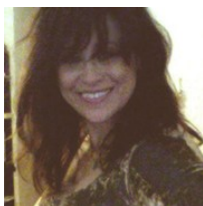
She estimates that her [PledgeMusic campaign](#) raised approximately \$10,000 for Headstrong during the month in which she offered a variety of rewards for different amounts of money contributed. For example, \$10 bought an AccessPass that included a digital download of the album before it was publicly available and other exclusives, while for \$250, fans got a 30-minute Skype or FaceTime call with the New Wave icon. For \$1,500, there was a choice of 4 in-person events, including breakfast with her in New York or Malibu, a tour of her husband's art gallery in Chelsea, or a walk with her in New York's Central Park. "I've got a lot of Skype calls to make," she said, laughing.

One reason she chose to work with Headstrong is that the organization has a quick turnaround time in getting veterans the help they need. Another is her longtime appreciation for military veterans and how not all who returned home were treated well.

"I grew up when the Vietnam war was coming to an end. I had an uncle who went to Vietnam and when he came back, he wasn't the same person. And I feel like those veterans were treated so badly and it's always been a special place in my heart," she said. "I wrote the song 'Broken' about that. That's what inspired me to write that song. I just felt like it was the right thing to do."

The fundraising is over, but the album is available in digital format on [iTunes](#) for \$7.99 and on CD for \$15.00 (shipping included) on her [website](#).

Smyth, whose band Scandal was a key part of the early success of MTV more than 30 years ago, is looking forward to going back into the studio early next year to record a new album.



Leslie Feffer

New York Classic Rock Music Examiner