

# The New York Times

November 26, 2015

## New Music

### Enya

*"Dark Sky Island"*  
(Warner Bros.)

"Only change is here to stay," Enya sings in "The Humming," a song about geological cycles of creation and disintegration that opens her new album, "Dark Sky Island." But constancy, not change, is what Enya's music provides. On "Dark Sky Island," as always, Enya offers plush serenity and the familiarity of sounds she has been using since her 1988 album, "Watermark." She sings in her feathery voice amid orchestras of sampled strings, stolid keyboard arpeggios and choirs of her overdubbed vocals. She's eternally consonant, bringing melo-



die that are steeped in hymn, lullaby, waltz, Baroque opera and Celtic tradition, all radiating a free-floating reverence.

After seven years between studio albums, Enya and her collaborators — the producer Nicky Ryan and the lyricist

Roma Ryan, who are married — emphasize continuity and comfort on "Dark Sky Island." The lyrics often mention homecomings; the music is a warm bath. Using a string ensemble to define the beat, "Echoes in Rain" deliberately alludes to "Orinoco Flow," Enya's international hit from 1988 — though "Echoes in Rain" trudges where "Orinoco Flow" danced. (Much of the album is held back by rhythms that are all too foursquare.) For more dedicated Enya devotees, "The Forge of the Angels" and "The Loxian Gates" continue a thread begun on previous albums, a legend of a migration through space by the Loxians, Celts of the future with a language invented (and translated back) by Roma Ryan.

The album's better moments don't need cross-references. "Even in the Shadows" moves as close as Enya gets to 1960s pop, with a steady, explicit beat and lyrics that cope with a breakup. "Sancta Maria" is a euphoric waltz with Enya singing the title again and again in a tinkling, gleaming production like a gigantic virtual music box.

There are also two slow, crystalline ballads of personal loss: "I Could Never Say Goodbye," a plaint of separation, and "So I Could Find My Way," an elegy for a loving parent or mentor that could become a funeral staple. The melodies sound both ancient and intimate, and the production steps back to let them breathe.

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