Katie Melua - The House (2010)

01. I'd Love To Kill You
02. The Flood
03. A Happy Place
04. A Moment Of Madness
05. Red Balloons
06. Tiny Alien
07. No Fear Of Heights
08. The One I Love Is Gone
09. Plague Of Love
10. God On The Drums, Devil On The Bass
11. Twisted
12. The House
Katie Melua - Composer, Guitar (Acoustic), Vocals Mike Batt - Arranger, Conductor Keith Brazil - Drums B.J. Cole - Pedal Steel Guitar Steve Donnelly - Guitar Fergus Gerrand - Drums Tim Harries - Bass, Piano Arden Hart - Keyboards Dominic Miller - Guitar William Orbit - Kalimba, Producer Luke Potashnick - Guitar Henry Spinetti - Drums Paul Stanborough - Mandolin Jim Watson - Piano

Vocalist Katie Melua's 2010 album The House is an atmospheric, romantic, and sometimes eerie album of arty adult alternative pop. While longtime producer Mike Batt is on board here, journeyman electronic producer William Orbit takes the main production helm. The result is Melua's most mature album to date and one that will certainly draw well-earned comparisons to such art pop icons as Kate Bush and Tori Amos. And while immaculately produced tracks like "The Flood" and "Twisted" do evince Bush's literate and operatic sound, they also bring to mind the grand, retro-leaning approach of guitarist/singer-songwriter Richard Hawley. Which isn't to say that Melua hews closely to any kind of '60s pop; on the contrary, these are clearly contemporary songs with a modern point of view. But there is a bit of moody Nick Drake-style guitar work and the way the songs build and swoop, often with symphonic backing (the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra appears here), is very much in keeping with Hawley's particular Brill

Building meets coastal British town grandeur. In that sense, the album is a bit of a grower and has an overall soft, reflective quality. As with most of The House, songs like the folk-inflected opener "I'd Love to Kill You," the Eastern-tinged "The Flood," and the yearning and pretty "Red Balloons," take time to build and grab you slowly with deft, biting lyrics and Melua's lilting, burnished vocals. ---Matt Collar, Rovi

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