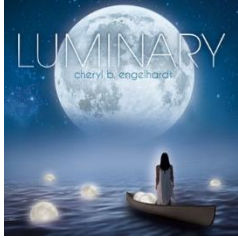


Cheryl B. Engelhardt

Luminary



I have always thought that once a note is played it becomes part of the musical energy of the universe like thought or motion. Now imagine a white washed room on the island of Crete where Cheryl B. Engelhardt created this music. The walls are permeated with wave after wave of energy. And the music is sublime.

There is some wonderful mixology to the tunes on **Cheryl B. Engelhardt's** album **Luminary**. She uses piano, voice, electronics, and sometimes bells. She also incorporates a great deal of cosmic energy to tell her unique stories of places and things that we can only imagine. She draws our attention skyward, past the clouds, and up into the space where the stars reside. Her ten tracks of piano music are contemporary with a tinge of New Age and Ambient, but every story is palatable to the open mind. Engelhardt's method is somewhat minimalistic on many of these tunes. They are reminiscent of Ólafur Arnalds in a way, but that is meant as a compliment. If music has a temperature, this music would be very cool, almost cold. It is the cold infinite beauty of deep space, of vast expanses, and of dreamy places.

Sister of Eos is a reference to the Goddess of the Dawn and a fitting beginning to a journey. Everything is light, reflected and otherwise. We know about the qualities of light; intensity, color, movement, and direction. It is safe to say that Cheryl has captured the light and presents it to us as a musical gift like fireflies from her unfolding hands. Except this light is made up of otherworldly sound. The music in this opening tune is the first example of that cold, clear energy that permeates the recording.

Bear with me now. We have to delve into the world of physics and chemistry to understand the term and the tune **Deliquesce**. A solid that changes into a liquid form. Imagine snow melting on your warm fingertips. Engelhardt once again plays with the temperatures and this time the stars deliquesce into sparkling, liquid light. Surrealistic voice and spatial piano combine to soothe the psyche.

In one tune the music is sparse, but the implications are complex. **Mortal Tides** blends classical components and breathless, seraphic voice to create an introspective voyage. It feels like elementals are surrounding you, washing you in waves of sound. And yet you remain untouched by the physical.

There is an exoplanet out there that has more rings around it than Saturn ever dreamed of. The tune **Galileo's Rings** captures the concentric ice and dust and multifaceted reflections of a deep space discovery. Engelhardt uses eerie reverse quavers and distant voices to denote a kind of faraway beauty. It exists in the notes we can hear. It is a place so distant however, that we can only see it with our mind's eye.

Ataraxy, a state of calmness, is the theme of the tune by the same name. There is a pulsing drone in it that, at first, left me on edge, but it finally smoothed out into a sort of muted percussion. Cold, sharp notes on Cheryl's piano reverberate and drift away only to be replaced by more. It is a peacefulness found only in darkness, in twinkling stars, or in moonlight.

One dark night, long ago, I witnessed bioluminescence in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. This is different. Sometimes, bioluminescence, by its very definition, can be a light from within. Polished piano and exotic electrics flash by giving light and life to the track **Bioluminescence**. The dreamlike minimalism slows time as we know it. This weightless melody allows us to float along and to glow. This is my favorite on Luminary for its ability to pull on the spirit as if it were being affected by an unseen gravitational pull.

I liked every track on Luminary. To me, it is the musical equivalent of a one act play. Every song segues into the next like an overlapping sonic wave, all from the same ocean of seductive sound. Engelhardt balances the minimalist with the dreamer, the lover with the emotions, and still manages to push the listener beyond the boundaries of the imagination. I would recommend this album. - R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews.

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Empowering the concept of "mindfulness" pianist and composer Cheryl B. Engelhardt creates radiantly serene music in sound vibrations of voice, piano, and bell to give the listener the ultimate peaceful journey. Her ten resonating tracks of poignant and polished contemporary music on Luminary become the perfect background for awareness, respite, and comfort.

- R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews