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### Context is Everything: Endless Melancholy – Her Name in a Language of Stars (2015)

 [September 7, 2015](#)  [Valerie Polichar](#)

The first time I heard *Her Name in a Language of Stars*, on headphones in my study on a Sunday afternoon, I thought it was pleasant but undistinguished. Admittedly, distinction in an ambient album is a tricky business; but at its best, you can hear the unique qualities of the particular creator, can feel the music could not have been made by anyone else. I put the album on again one day while I was working, and was halfway through before the music registered. An inauspicious beginning.

But the third time I listened was a few days before the one-year anniversary of the death of a very close friend. I was staring at a piece of paper and feeling precisely nothing, that hollow sensation that is part and parcel of grief. The silence becoming too loud, I thought I would put on



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something soft, something not too intrusive, and so I clicked on “Burial, When the Sun Sets,” the sixth and longest track on *Stars*, and prepared to be soothed. I found, instead, that I was being taken on a journey through my own unattended sorrow. Yes, the constant fuzz here is a little overspent, but the shape, draped carefully over fifteen minutes, is subtle but has the power to transport.

The band’s name seems banal, irretrievably emo, but the album’s title and sonics are more evocative. Dreamy and textural, **Endless Melancholy**’s fourth full-length release, *Her Name in a Language of Stars*, sweeps over the ears like a gossamer blanket. Already about 47 minutes, a respectable album length, *Her Name in a Language of Stars* is fleshed out to just over an hour with three bonus remixes by Benoît Pioulard, Wil Bolton, and Desolate Horizons. The new album extends **Endless Melancholy**’s self-billed “minimal piano and ambient sounds” with cinematic soundsweeps and a dash of post-rock noise. It’s an album whose listenability and gentle movement, in the end, outweigh its flaws.



“Tiny Box of Memories,” the first track and one of the best, offers percussion in the form of music-box tones and gets structure from a scrape of dark cinematic pads nearly five minutes in. “Her Name in a Language of Stars” sweeps one out of a reverie with shifting chord patterns; again, change is introduced towards the end, as the music turns deftly into a sparkle of light across water, almost visible in the listening. The conversational samples in “Their Hearts Erased,” coupled with a mellow retro-synth lead,



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effectively combat an over-familiar background sound.

On the other hand, "Like Ships Without Anchors," pretty as it is with its bird-cries and somnolent synth pads, effectively evokes the stillness of ocean, but lacks a distinctive voice. In general, what appears to be over-reliance on a narrow set of synth sounds on the album lends a sameness to the texture between some of the tracks here, making one wish the creator had spent a little more time exploring the boundaries of his kit.

But there's no denying the loveliness of the feel, and there is certainly value in consistency in an album that might be played as an aural background to a busy life. In that context, *Her Name in a Language of Stars* is calming, settling, peaceful. In the context of grief, it's an unexpected wake-up call to the depths to which loss can reach.

*Unappreciated Scholars Review Grade: B+*

*Her Name in a Language of Stars* is available on [Bandcamp](#); tracks can also be streamed on [Soundcloud](#). Follow **Endless Melancholy** on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/emelancholy>.

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