

Katie Melua – Call Off The Search (2004)

Written by bluesever

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1. "Call off the Search" (Mike Batt) – 3:24 2. "Crawling up a Hill" (John Mayall) – 3:25 3. "The Closest Thing to Crazy" (Batt) – 4:12 4. "My Aphrodisiac Is You" (Batt) – 3:34 5. "Learnin' the Blues" (Delores J. Silver) – 3:23 6. "Blame It on the Moon" (Batt) – 3:47 7. "Belfast (Penguins and Cats)" (Katie Melua, Batt) – 3:21 8. "I Think It's Going to Rain Today" (Randy Newman) – 2:30 9. "Mockingbird Song" (Batt) – 3:06 10. "Tiger in the Night" (Batt) – 3:07 11. "Faraway Voice" 12. "Lilac Wine". Katie Melua - Composer, Guitar, Vocals Mike Batt - Arranger, Composer, Conductor, Organ, Piano, Producer Jim Cregan - Guitar Tim Harries - Bass Instrument, Guitar (Bass) The Irish Film Orchestra Michael Kruk - Drums Chris Spedding - Guitar Henry Spinetti - Drums

English listeners went mad for Katie Melua with the release of her debut album in late 2003. Issued domestically in June 2004, *Call Off the Search* posits the lovely Melua pristinely in between pop, adult contemporary, and traditional American musical forms, with savvy marketing handling the finishing touches. (Think Norah Jones.) It's a comfortable, lightly melodic affair that drinks red wine safely in the middle of the road. Raised in Soviet Georgia and the United Kingdom, Melua has a beguiling accent that colors the ends of her phrases, adding character to her velvety, if occasionally only satisfactory singing voice. She has a nice time with the understated R&B sashay of John Mayall's "Crawling Up a Hill," as well as Mike Batt's "My Aphrodisiac Is You," which is spiced up with barrelhouse piano, muted trumpet, and sly references to opium and the Kama Sutra. The singer's own "Belfast (Penguins and Cats)" opens nicely with a few measures of solo acoustic guitar before it's joined by the orchestral maneuvers that sweep through the majority of *Call Off the Search*'s after-dark cabaret. (Melua also penned a dedication to Eva Cassidy, who she's been compared to vocally.) While the instrumentation is never overbearing, a stoic version of Randy Newman's "I Think It's Going to Rain Today" and a couple of late-album pop vocal entries do dawdle a bit in the soft-focus halo that hovers over *Search*'s more easygoing stretches. These selections are perfectly capable, yet pretty obvious, as if the decision was made to sprinkle Melua's debut equally with safety and variety, in case a particular style didn't stick. Still, despite a few detours down easy street, *Call Off the Search* is a promising debut, and comfortable like the first drink of the evening.

---Johnny Loftus, Rovi

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