Vanessa Carlton – Liberman (2015)

01 – Take It Easy 02 – Willows 03 – House of Seven Swords 04 – Operator 05 – Blue Pool 06 – Nothing Where Something Used to Be 07 – Matter of Time 08 – Unlock The Lock 09 – River 10 – Ascension Deluxe Edition: *1. Vanessa Carlton - Blue Pool - Live Living Room Session [02:39] 2. Vanessa Carlton - River - Live Living Room Session [02:47] 3. Vanessa Carlton - Take it Easy - Live Living Room Session[04:27] 4. Vanessa Carlton - Willows - Live Living Room Session [02:49] 5. Vanessa Carlton - House of the Seven Swords - Original Demo[02:57] 6. Vanessa Carlton - Operator - Live Living Room Session [03:12] 7. Vanessa Carlton - Unlock the Lock - Live Living Room Session[03:09] 8. Vanessa Carlton - Nothing Where Something Used to Be - Live Living Room Session[03:49]*
Vanessa Carlton - Composer, Keyboards, Organ, Piano, Primary Artist, Tambourine, Vocals Adam Landry - Drums, Guitars, Programming, Synthesizer John J. McCauley III - Drums, Guitar, Guitar (Bass), Guitar (Electric) Steve Osborne - Drums, Guitars, Keyboards, Mixing, Synthesizer Skye Steele - String Arrangements, Violin Craig Alvin - Mixing

Continuing with the austere sincerity she carved out on 2011's Rabbits on the Run, Vanessa Carlton nevertheless opens up a bit on 2015's Liberman, an album named after her grandfather and written in the years after the singer/songwriter married and started a family. Carlton doesn't directly reference her lineage anywhere on Liberman, but with its ghostly music box pianos, electronic watercolors, staccato strings, and elliptical melodies, the album feels simultaneously elusive and introspective. While Carlton rarely quickens her pulse here -- at best, the record achieves a gentle simmer, never a boil -- all the slyly shifting sonics enveloping the songs give Liberman a painterly feel, a shift that comes as a welcome tonic to its predecessor. Where Rabbits on the Run often felt insular, Liberman seems to float above the fray, achieving a delicacy that's reflective while skillfully avoiding solipsism. Sometimes, the songs feel like sketches -- certainly, they're lacking direct hooks or anything designed to pull a listener within her world; she demands engagement on her own terms -- but the cumulative effect is greater than the sum of the parts. It's an album that plays as a piece, not as individual songs. Carlton may be avoiding any of the grand gestures that defined her earliest work but at this point, this quietly meditative pop feels like a truer reflection of her intentions than "A Thousand Miles." She's not a mainstream singer/songwriter relying on colorful productions and direct melody,

she's happy to exist just on the edge of the fringe, finding sustenance in risk. --- Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Rovi

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