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A Light in The Dark

The wee orchestra Edison Woods plays dirty pretty things

MUSIC | Julia Frodahl's tiny orchestra, Edison Woods, has been described as a "cross between the sounds of Elysian Fields and the sentiments of David Lynch." So it's no surprise to find in the music a certain darkness. But for ardent fans of Frodahl's delicate chamber vignettes, it's a shock that her band loves the Darkness. Yes, they believe in a thing called love. (Spandex, not so much.)

"There's a lot of sadness in our music," says Frodahl, whose spooky

beauty evokes that of a Lynch heroine, "but there are so many other colors responding to that sadness: hope, gratitude, darkness, resilience. It's never meant to dwell in the sadness or bring you to sadness. It's more about the beautiful journey out of it."

Frodahl has one of those thesaurus-busting voices, "gorgeous" being so overused. Same for "cinematic" and "intimate." As many as seven players provide strings and winds on "Nest of Machines," the band's third full-length album. The lineup that visits D.C. on Saturday features Frodahl's voice, piano and glockenspiel with David Berger's drums and guitar. It could be



Weimar Germany's dream of 21st-century New York.

As a girl, says Frodahl, "I didn't dream of being a rock star. I was going to be a banker so that I could buy my mom new furniture. She had some terrible orange-red sofas with kitchen appliances printed all over them, and I mean big appliances! It was the '70s, though. I was fond of pink, so I had a pink ceiling and pink polka-dot wallpaper, and I didn't know much about anyone in posters. I read a lot and stayed up late with stacks of books and a flashlight under the covers."

The band is clearly an extension of that nascent literary bent. "When I create," says Frodahl, "I feel aware of my own feelings and of things I might not have noticed in my normal routines. My environment, its sounds, the breathing and beyond that, I feel connected to the unknown, to the next word or melody that is on its way."

BOB MASSEY

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SLEEPYTIME GIRL MUSEUM: Edison Woods' Julia Frodahl taps into the unknown.