



HELEN MONEY

Become Zero

THRILL JOCKEY

You had me at cello

How truly metal can one be on cello? If you're Apoca-

lyptica, you answer by growing waist-length hair, employing effects pedals to make the cello sound like a guitar, and pose and whip your hair ostentatiously while performing mainstream-friendly music. If you're Alison Chesley, on the other hand, you can tap into the more experimental, foreboding side of underground metal, not care one iota about the image, and instead focus on creating music that is powerful, harrowing and liberating.

Three years ago cellist Chesley, who has made a name for herself as Helen Money, joined forces with underground stalwart Profound Lore and the great Steve Albini to create *Arriving Angels*, an album that ingeniously blurred the line between experimental metal and neoclassical music. Now she has returned with *Become Zero*, and while the producer is different (Will Thomas) and she's on a new label (the equally reputable Thrill Jockey), it continues in very much the same direction as the last album, albeit with enough moments that signal even more progression from the gifted composer and musician.

Once again partnered with Neurosis/Sleep drummer Jason Roeder and pianist Rachel Grimes, Money not only creates sounds that are searing, soothing, and devastating, but *Become Zero* follows a distinct arc that, while not bearing a single lyric, mirrors that of classic storytelling: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement. Whether it's a sense of loss, sorrow, peace or resolution, it's all rendered vividly by the trio. And like the best metal music, leaves an immediate, indelible impression.

—ADRIEN BEGRAND

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