

REVIEWS

SNOW PATROL

*Fallen Empires*

[Interscope]

Despite considerable success in the U.K. and Ireland, Snow Patrol's popularity in America lags behind fellow Brit-rockers like Coldplay. But while Coldplay's albums have come to feel increasingly hollow in their grandiosity, Snow Patrol's latest continues to hone the cinematic, downhearted sound that has yielded a string of platinum albums abroad. The band experiments a little here with pounding drums and jittery synthesizers on the title track and subtle electronic noise framing a booming rhythm track on lead single "Called Out in the Dark." Mostly, though, Snow Patrol emphasizes proven strengths: glimmers of guitar, moody minor-key piano chords and Gary Lightbody's melancholy voice. He pleads with impassioned urgency on "This Isn't Everything You Are" and sighs disconsolately on the wistful "New York," as spare keyboard gives rise to a sweeping orchestral arrangement on the refrain. It's powerful stuff, to be sure—maybe powerful enough to vault Snow Patrol to new heights on this side of the pond. —ED

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