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## Reviews

Track Listing:

1. Circle Line
2. Square Go
3. Miles De Besos
4. Zoe 25
5. Arc Of The Curve
6. Manchmal
7. Openwater
8. Dark Star
9. Where In The World
10. 13th Star



**Artist:** Fish  
**Title:** "13th Star"  
**Label:** Chocolate Frog UK  
**Release Date:** 4/8/2008  
**Genre:** Progressive Rock

**Rating:** 4.5/5

**Written By:** Ken Pierce (copyright 2008) for PiercingMetal.com

Before I begin this review I have to admit that I had lost a little of my gung-ho steam in following the solo career of Fish as not only are his releases sometimes hard to come by, but the last couple were not doing for me what it had done in the beginning of his efforts and had left me wanting a little bit more since around the time of "Sunsets On Empires". I enjoyed his live concert release "Return To Childhood" as the singer poet revisited some of his most stunning work with Marillion but as far as solo music I was seeking a little more. This view would change the moment that I heard the beginnings of "13th Star" for while it's arrival would come at the cost of many upheavals in the singers personal life it is true that while tragic, these pitfalls of life often make for the best song-writing. At least when it comes to Fish it does. The album comes after the very public engagement and breakup of the singer and Heather Findlay from Mostly Autumn and it is clear that this is one of the key motivators behind the often dark and angry passages we find on the release. Fish mixes it up in terms of tempo and while he is expressing discontent at times this is not an angst laden release but instead one that often finds him mulling over the past happenings. It opens with "Circle Line" and delivers a powerful line about while "I'm living out the dream to earn my freedom from the rat race, all I do is survive". Just another day indeed and shows where apparent fame and slight fortune are really not much when it comes down to it. "Square Go" is one of the heavier numbers and it comes into ballad territory right after with "Miles De Besos". The track is one that lines out the story of a love affair and that while long over, it has left its mark on him and will not soon fade away. It must be pointed out that with all Fish releases, the true treasure lies in the words that he has given us because the message can easily pass you by if you just listen to the album while doing something else that your day requires of you. Fortunately the release comes with a booklet loaded with the words and images to allow this to be done easily. One of my favorite numbers comes by way of "Arc Of The Curve", and had this been a more open music industry where quality outweighed quantity, Fish might have very well had a hit single on his hands with this one. "Manchmal" is definitely the heaviest of the albums output and it refers to the popular fable of the turtle and the scorpion who need to cross the river bank.

It's clear that one of the most poignant numbers comes to us via "Where In The World" and it is also perhaps the saddest of the albums offerings. Fish sings of how last year he was in love and the plans were being made and now instead he lives in a different reality of stolen dreams and questions about what went wrong. This track reminded me of the way Fish was singing to a particular person in his life but in one sense he seems to be singing to himself as he searches for the answers on his own accord. The song is brought to more dramatic life by atmospheric guitar and backup singers. When the album closes up with the somber "13th Star", we find Fish not sitting idle in his sorrow but instead choosing to press forward into life's trials ever further as a man given strength by the resolution of his frailties. He reminds us that we are all too human on each of the tracks presented and that sometimes redemption, while always possible, is not as clearly lined out as we would like it to be. This is in my opinion the best that we have gotten from the singer in a number of years and it will be a release that goes down as one of his strongest and most powerful musical statements to date.

**Official Web Site:** [www.the-company.com](http://www.the-company.com)

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