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REVIEW

Music Review: Marillion - *Somewhere Else*

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Marillion returns three years after their epic, widely lauded *Marbles* concept piece with another self-produced album. While no one seriously expects them to top such a feat, all ears are curious as to how they attempt to follow up what many now consider to be the unexpected peak of their 25 year career.

Marillion spent their career in the '80s carving out a niche in the resurrected prog movement of the period, aping much of the territory that Genesis, Yes, and Gentle Giant had already covered so well a decade before. By the end of the decade, things would change drastically with the departure of their lead singer, the poetically-gifted choke-throated Fish, who would be replaced by Steve Hogarth, who brought to the band a more traditional pop-rock style of singing - not to mention the sensibilities of such a singer.

Over the past two decades since Hogarth joined the band, Marillion has slowly shifted from a progressive band into what they are now: a pop-rock band doing very intelligent music now that happens to occasionally be conceptual in nature. This album, however, *isn't*, and I'm personally glad they opted for an album of songs rather than another big concept piece. Following the amazing [two-disc *Marbles*](#) with another big, heavy epic like that would have been a mistake - too much too soon. Instead, what we get is a lighter, airier Marillion, but no less engaging (aside from a couple of stumbles.)

Marillion have found their sound finally - what really started to take shape on 2001's *Anaraknophobia*, if a little roughly, they perfected with *Marbles* in 2004, they now continue here, and that's basically a good thing. While it makes for an album of no real surprises, it's simple, smart pop with a good band and an emotive vocalist.

Where Marillion let the listener down on *Somewhere Else* is where they simply try too hard - "Most Toys" where they attempt to rock out as hard as they can (and mostly flail about instead of hit the target) and "Last Century For Man," where they attempt a cautionary tale and only score with the infectious and beautiful chorus, but the song falls flat in the verses. It just isn't a very strong message song - some bands are better at delivering straight-up messages and others are better at hinting at them creatively. Marillion should stick to the latter.

For fans, *Somewhere Else* makes a lovely transition out of the emotional, intense, and dense *Marbles*. For newbies, *Marbles* is going to be the place to start - and then give *Somewhere Else* a try as it's easily one of their most focused and solid albums since 1995's *Afraid Of Sunlight*. Songs such as nearly epic "The Wound" and the contemplative "Thankyou Whoever You Are" should quickly find themselves on many Marillion fans most-played lists, but it's the charming acoustic closer "Faith" that could be a surprise for everyone - it's beautiful.

Comments

#1 — April 11, 2007 @ 09:53AM — Connie Phillips [\[URL\]](#)

Congrats! This article has been forwarded to the [Advance.net websites](#) and [Boston.com](#).

#2 — April 11, 2007 @ 10:38AM — Frans [\[URL\]](#)

Nicely written review! Marillion are one of those bands that require a little more effort to find out what they are doing.

Pundits have frequently predicted their demise, but they are still here, strong as ever and putting out meaningful music!

Frans

#3 – April 12, 2007 @ 12:38PM – Peter [\[URL\]](#)

Looking forward to hearing it. Although I do think that Brave and Afraid of Sunlight are deserving of similar kudos, in terms of acknowledging them finding their sound. I think Brave may be one of the single greatest concept albums ever recorded.

