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Marillion: Somewhere Else

Marillion seems to be appealing to a commercially-oriented buying demographic with this album. There are parts of this record you'll love, and there are parts ... you might not. The band's work in the Hogarth era is marked by its variability - or some might say inconsistency. Although there have been some dud CDs, arguably including *Radiation*, *Anoraknophobia* and *marillion.com*, each of those records had some excellent songs. Similarly, the great albums had songs that were less than stellar. So it's generally safer to think of Marillion's work in terms of the songs rather than the CDs. Having said that, though - *Somewhere Else* probably fits somewhere between *Marbles* and *marillion.com* stylistically, and it's closer to *.com* in terms of quality.



Somewhere Else doesn't share all of *Marbles*'s progressive elements, its subtleties, or its general appeal. This music is a bit more linear, and it's very vocals-oriented. Steve Hogarth's singing is as emotion-laden as ever, switching effortlessly in and out of falsetto, and very expressive - in the style of "The Invisible Man" or "Angelina" from *Marbles*, or Radiohead's classic "Creep". But you might wish that he would stop singing for just a few minutes and let some instrumentals shine through. Steve Rothery's legendary guitar work is heard in only a few places, and Mark Kelly provides some very appealing piano lines, but there aren't any instrumentals to into which you can really sink your teeth.

"Most Toys" is a hard-hitting rocker with very simplistic lyrics that won't have much appeal to Marillion's traditional fanbase, although it might win them some commercial radio time. "Last Century for Man" also has simplistic lyrics with little subtlety, and a catchy melody that stays with you for days. There are no epics here, with 10 songs in just 52 minutes, and the title track (the longest at 8 minutes) is the standout piece with a meandering structure, gently appealing delivery and an almost minimalist approach to the instrumentals. Some might call it sleepy - but it definitely goes into the list of Marillion's better songs. Other highlights are the opening track "The Other Half", and "Thank You, Whoever You Are" - a fairly straightforward piece that features some nice but all-too-brief moments from Rothery's guitar.

If Marillion is chasing after radio time, or if they're wooing the Coldplay / Radiohead / Pineapple Thief audience, this song-oriented record will probably get them there. But it will do so at the cost of a significant portion of their progressive rock fanbase.

- Track Listing:**
- The Other Half
 - See It Like a Baby
 - Thankyou Whoever You Are
 - Most Toys
 - Somewhere Else
 - A Voice from the Past
 - No Such Thing
 - The Wound
 - The Last Century for Man
 - Faith

Added: June 20th 2007
Reviewer: Duncan Glenday
Score: ★★★★★
Related Link: The Band's Website
Hits: 773
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