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Main Menu

- .. [Home](#)
- **Articles**
 - .. [Behind The Scenes](#)
 - .. [Freelance Prog](#)
 - .. [In From the Outside](#)
 - .. [Something On My Mind](#)
 - .. [The Next Big Thing](#)
 - .. [Tiles - In The Studio](#)
 - .. [A View From North of 49](#)

- **Interviews**
 - .. [Afterimage](#)
 - .. [Interviews](#)
 - .. [10 Quick Ones](#)
 - .. [Meet The Staff](#)

- **News Items**
 - .. [Festivals](#)
 - .. [In The Studio](#)
 - .. [MP3s](#)
 - .. [News](#)
 - .. [Release Dates](#)
 - .. [Reviews](#)
 - .. [Tour Dates](#)
 - .. [Wallpapers](#)

- **Interactive**
 - .. [Calendar](#)
 - .. [Feedback](#)
 - .. [Forum](#)
 - .. [Games](#)
 - .. [Store](#)
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 - .. [Your Account](#)

- **Other Services**
 - .. [Email Signup](#)
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 - .. [Top 10](#)
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Interviews: An Interview with Ian Mosely of Marillion



Interview with Ian Mosley - Monday, June 18, 2007:

As interviewed by Scott Thompson



Congratulations on your new album and tour! How did the tour go?

Thank you! I'd have to say this tour has been simply amazing! There has been something about the audiences on this tour in particular that has made every show very gratifying. It has been the reaction of the crowds in these shows ... even after we have left the stage on various nights and said to each other "well, we didn't play too well tonight" or "we didn't play that particular song so well tonight," it has been the fans who have made this our best tour to date simply based on their reaction!

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We are taking about a week off, then off to Oslo Saturday night and then the Pink Pop Festival in Holland. Oslo should be interesting, as I haven't played there since I was with Steve Hackett, many years ago. We plan on entering the studio late in the summer to begin working on the next album after that.

I had the privilege of attending this years Convention in Holland. I was amazed at the atmosphere overall, and the fact that people were there from all over the world! What was the band's perspective from that experience?

We had quite an amazing time at this year's convention. The last one was in England during cold, rainy weather, and was quite depressing really (laughs). This year's site (at CenterParcs in Holland) was very accommodating in allowing us to have our convention there, and they were all very great to the band, crew and our fans.

I imagine that presenting a family-oriented "resort" with the idea of having 3,000 rock music fans for a whole weekend, not to mention the fact that a stage and concert hall of sorts needed to be *built* on their grounds – probably sounded scary to the management!

Yes, I think it was (laughs). But in fact, we have received emails from (CenterParcs) asking us to return for our next convention! The convention was a great time ... there was serious drinking going on, and serious partying ... but everyone had a great time, and no one got hurt. When all the Marillion fans get together, this usually happens – they are like a big family. This year was particularly amazing as some people were even there from as far as Australia and New Zealand! You just have to be there to understand how great it all is. We are a truly fortunate band to be able to experience it!

It is unfortunate that Marillion is not more well-known in the US. However, I do have to note that your tour to promote This Strange Engine and it's fan-financed "tour fund" should be a story more fit for rock music legend – no one else has done it! Your fan base around the world is extremely faithful, and you know, I just have to ask ... will we see you on this side of the pond anytime soon?

Well, unfortunately, the last time we went to the States, there was so much red tape, ever since 911; and now, it's so different just to get there – and really, too difficult and too costly to do. Don't get me wrong, we have had a wonderful time touring the US ... my children are actually Americans, and live over there. I even remember the first time I landed in L.A., and I won't tell you how long ago that was (laughs); but I thought I had landed in heaven!

The tour fund was such an incredible event too. We were so amazed as the dedication of the American fans ... not to mention how trusting they must have been. Really, we could have taken all that money and had a great party in Rio! (laughs) But actually, there was a guy in the U.K. that even donated \$1,500 to the tour fund, just to be a part of it. We are just so lucky to have such amazing fans.

But things are so different as I say. Now, we have to get the entire band and crew to the American Embassy in London by 7 a.m. and each pay huge fees just to get visas for the tour. In addition to that, we manage to have lost anywhere between 50 and 60 thousand dollars these last tours. Getting paid in American dollars doesn't help matters either, given the cost of traveling and supporting a crew across the US, and again, the red tape in the first place. Recently, a famous orchestra from London was scheduled to go to New York and perform at Carnegie Hall. They actually had to cancel their performance due to the requirements

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of the Embassy in allowing visas. It's very unfortunate.

So, we could tour the States, but then we'd have to split up afterwards! (laughs)

My favorite aspect of Marillion's music is the emotionally-charged songwriting that features powerful instrumentation and musical dynamics. Which of your songs have the tendency to move you the most while performing them live?

I have always been a big fan of melody. I don't want to have to count all the time, I like to get lost in the song. There are so many songs we have been playing on this tour that I really enjoy playing. For example, a song like "Fantastic Place" is really a simple song, and not a difficult one to play; but it is still a great song. I really enjoy playing Easter, which is one of my favorites, it's a perfect marriage of music and lyrics really. Then there are songs like "The Invisible Man" from Marbles. It has a great section that is in "7" – but it is played in a way that adds to the melody, and musically, you just feel it. I think that if a song is too difficult to play, it's not a great song. There are plenty of challenging pieces of music in our repertoire that really just carry themselves without my having to count each measure! For example, we had a great time the other night playing "Garden Party," as we were playing in Cambridge. We hadn't rehearsed it or played it in years, but since it was written about Cambridge, we thought it would be a good idea ... Well, it's just another example of a song with a more complex rhythm that just moves itself. "A Voice from the Past" and the title track ("Somewhere Else") from the new album are also very fun to play.

In contrast, I also enjoy playing songs like "King;" because I get to make a lot of noise! (laughs) Seriously, there has to be a reason, for me, to get so crazy on the drums in a song. It has to be appropriate to the melody. I remember working with Steve Hackett on a piece of music. He said, "o.k., just go MAD at this point;" and I said, "but WHY?" (laughs). And that is how I felt about it. In the end, he told me why, and it worked brilliantly for that piece of music! (laughs)

Who would you like to work with outside of Marillion if given the chance?

My favorite band right now is System of a Down. They are an extremely honest band, and great musicians. And, ... well that's about where the parallel with Marillion ends! (laughs)

Honestly, I have seen them about four times now and think they are absolutely brilliant! I would have loved to have played on their latest album. They are an amazing band. I'm not sure whom else I would want to work with, but I would as long as it's fun!

Which drummers are catching your attention?

I do really enjoy Mike Portnoy's drumming, the guy in Dream Theater. I have always been amazed at his playing, it's unbelievable really. We played they're latest album on the bus the other day. I have always listened to guys like Billy Cobham, Omar Hakim ... I am a big fan of John Bonham too – he was a brilliant player, and totally underrated in my opinion. There were nuances in his style that still amaze me. There is a drummer named Christian Vardi in a band called Magna. He is a brilliant drummer from France who I enjoy listening to.

If you weren't involved in music, what profession do you think you most likely would have stumbled into?

Probably some kind of crime really! (laughs) I mean, not something where anyone got hurt, probably some kind of giant extortion!

(laughs)

Well, you'd get to make your own hours that way, and the pay would be good...

Exactly! But seriously, I've never known anything outside of music. Even the odd jobs I held when I was younger were based in music, like working at a record store. I came from a musical family, my father was a musician. There was always music in the home. It's all I've ever known or wanted to do. I don't know, I like tennis I guess. But all I can really do is hit the ball around! (laughs)

What's next for Marillion ... are we going to be hearing from you ten years from now, and beyond?

I certainly hope so! Again, as long as it's fun and the fans continue to enjoy it. We are having a great time and like I said, this tour has been outstanding!

Thank you for your time in talking with me! We're looking forward to the next Marillion album and I'll see you at the next convention as well!

Thank you! Cheers!

Visit the Marillion website at <http://www.marillion.com>

Read Ytsejam.com's review of Marillions new album 'Somewhere Else' here: <http://www.ytsejam.com/modules.php?name=Reviews&rop=showcontent&id=1141>



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