

All Music Guide Review

Once upon a time, **Marillion** was unmistakably a prog pop band. But by the dawn of the 21st century, it was becoming increasingly clearer that the group was shedding their early prog direction in favor of melodic pop (akin to **Radiohead**'s more focused and mainstream moments, or even comparable to **Coldplay**, if **Chris Martin** and co. were a tad more askew). This is especially evidenced by the first half of their 2008 double album, *Happiness Is the Road* (issued as two separate releases, "Volume 1: Essence" and "Volume 2: The Hard Shoulder"). By this point, the group's devoted cult following awaits each release with baited breath, and both neither volume should disappoint their post-**Fish** era fans -- especially on the simply soaring title track from **Vol. 1**. But on the second disc, the group gets to follow a much proggy path -- which you could have figured by taking a gander at the song title, "The Man from Planet Marzipan." **Marillion** continue to explore the artier side of rock without getting too crazy, as heard throughout both volumes of *Happiness Is the Road*.

~ Greg Prato, All Music Guide