



# Somewhere in London

## Marillion

MDV Entertainment Group - MVDV4766

Available from Marillion's web site.

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange

by **Mark S. Tucker**

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The more idiotic of the progressive music critic circle, the oiks you'll find at the Progression and Expose magazines, for instance, refer to this group as 'neoprof', and that's where the great band's troubles all begin: a meaningless attribution indicative of second-rate work endowed by inaesthetic maladepts. Marillion was first deemed, back in 1983, as the second coming of Genesis, especially because of Fish, their powerful lead singer, and his blatant Gabrielesque masquing on-stage. A moody gent, he went off on his own for a string of marvelous solos (and killer "bootlegs"), and in walked a guy, Steve Hogarth, who became prog's Steve Perry, possessed off a voice rarely experienced in the realm. The first two releases, *Season's End* and *Holiday in Eden*, were beautiful examples of how well progrock could display intelligence in melody while still rebelling from norms.

The Fish Era had greatly reinvigorated the genre but it was time to move on, especially as Marillion was no longer the same band. With Hogarth, a long line of experimentation ensued, blending two lines of convention (prog, mainstream) with subtle innovation, kind of like Saga was also embarked upon but more so, much more so. Despite prophecies of doom from the old hard-liners, Marillion has since done well, thank you very much, though it wasn't easy and didn't require the cracking of the Earth or the raising of Satan for it, as the temper of the previous band might have. In among their many VHS & DVD releases (20!) Hogarth's presence was played nicely, especially his spooky performance for the video clip of *The Uninvited Guest* (on *From Stoke Row to Ipanema*). Now, *Somewhere in London*, a twofer, is the latest in a long long string of issuances from a well-beloved group.

Dripping with drama, the set starts slowly and softly with the opening of *Splintering Heart*, Hogarth encanting the lead stanzas, tension building until the song slams into it own energetic heart, erupting. The camera work is elegant, reminiscent of Pink Floyd's *Pulse* (one of the greatest rock vids ever), highlighting while caressing, washing over the members, the singer its center, who all the while looks

like a world-weary but hip lead from *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Flanking him, Steve Rothery is one of rock's few axemen having the Gilmourian slowhand alongside an armada of expressive techniques, himself a key to the group's more Romantic new vision. The DVD follows on Marillion's 14th studio release, *Somewhere Else*, and, with die-hard fan devotion keeping them survivable by various ingenious means atop a hellish amount of hard work, managed to finally put them back in the UK Top 30 in 2007, with several high-charting singles to boot. One listen to the exquisite mellifluity of *No Such Thing* informs why.

This is not a return to the Fish Era, not the retread of golden foundation songs that groups like Yes and King Crimson **must** depend upon for their own survivability. Marillion has chosen to keep itself current, ultimately a wise decision despite the fact that they would probably sell concerts better were they to do otherwise. But what then of art? These guys have been dedicated to the Muse, stalwart and unflinching; from Day One and the Hogarth Era is only a continuation of that. By such means are we presented not only with ever new material, sophisticated and depth-oriented, but also the chance to see it fully imbued live, carrying a dimension apart from the studio, something true fans lust after.

The sold-out crowd is fully packed into a huge double-decker hall, fully ignited, 100% intent on the music, blissful smiles abounding. The delicacy of the new oeuvre demands it, the listener floating along on waves of wistful neo-Elizabethan beauty with the musicians, nothing less will do. Where the group's first incarnation was focused on the contrast between good and evil, the degradations of modern culture, the new band digs into the redemption of hope amidst profound sorrow and existential trials. Thus the heart swells and aches in accordance with what they play.

Marillion has always been concept oriented and this is no exception, even if the narrative is not always fully supportive. One song flows into another, emotions shake hands with their antecedents, and the entire experience is of a euphoric dream with ecstasy and heartbreak. Lay hold of *Somewhere* not for the fist-pumping, butt shaking, or drunken carousing usual to rock extravaganzas, but instead for an exceptionally absorbing reflection on what it is to be human, for art speaking to the condition with an aesthetic evolved far away from the herd and its shallow pleasures. If you're going to be a hedonist, you might as well take it to the limit, and this is a damn good way to do it.

#### DISC ONE

##### *The Something Else Tour 2007*

- Splintering Heart
- The Other Half
- You're Gone
- No Such Thing
- Faith
- Thankyou Whoever You Are
- Fantastic Place
- The Wound
- A Voice from the Past
- Somewhere Else
- Man of a Thousand Faces
- Between You and Me
- King
- The Release
- Neverland

#### DISC TWO

##### *Some Played Earlier*

- Ocean Cloud
- Afraid of Sunlight
- Beautiful
- Most Toys
- Estonia
- Sugar Mice
- Easter

##### *Racket Club Rehearsal*

- The Last Century for Man
- Estonia
- Neverland
- Faith
- See It Like a Baby

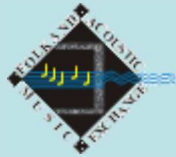
## 5.1 Mixes

- The Wound
- A Voice from the Past
- No Such Thing
- Somewhere Else

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