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Review by [David Cornelius](#) | posted October 15, 2008 | [E-mail the Author](#) | [Start a Discussion](#)

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Let's get right to the point: Marillion is the best rock group around, and better still, they're of that rare breed of band that have managed to improve with age.

Fans have long felt the group is one of the music world's best kept secrets, and perhaps always being on the sidelines of fame is what keeps them so accessible to their fans, especially now in the internet age. Those of you that only remember Marillion from their mid-1980s prog rock days of "Kaleigh" (and those of you who missed those days and have never heard of the band at all) may be amused to discover the group still going strong thanks to a fiercely loyal fan base.

With the release date for Marillion's fifteen studio album fast approaching, the band has offered up "Somewhere in London," a concert film culled from two dazzling performances at The Forum in Kentish Town, London, in June 2007. The concerts were the closing nights of their tour to promote last year's *Somewhere Else* album, an album that had the unfortunate job of following up *Marbles*, their two-disc collection hailed as one of their very best studio recordings. In comparison to *Marbles*, the general consensus among fans is that *Somewhere Else* is somewhat of a batch of also-rans. But it's a batch that grows on me every time I revisit it, and several songs (especially "No Such Thing" and "The Wound") stick out as prime examples of the band's exceptional musical prowess.

While Marillion shines in the recording studio, where intricate production creates layered works that enhance the songwriting, they're even better live, where their brand of musical bombast can spread out, and where the excitement of the crowd can fill the air with a certain electricity.

Unlike many established acts, to whom concerts are a place for greatest hits only (where "here's something off our new album" translates to "here's time for a bathroom break"), Marillion takes the idea of using a tour to promote a new album quite literally - and fans wouldn't have it any other way. What other thirty-year-old band could get an audience this excited with a concert consisting mostly of new stuff? Previously, they've even played their new albums in their entirety (most recently on their *Marbles* tour).

Here, they shuffle the material a little, mixing seven of their

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new songs (the other three from *Somewhere Else* appear as bonus performances on the DVD, separate from the concert film's official lineup) with a sampling of tunes from throughout their career - including a showstopping performance of a song originally released as a non-album B-side. When a band not only plays a rarity but receives a monstrous response from it, you know there's something special going on between artist and fan.

As a concert film (and like their previous performance videos), "Somewhere in London" (vividly directed and edited by Tim Sidwell) puts the focus on the songs themselves. We get few instances of between-song banter (except for a lengthy speech on world poverty, which singer Steve Hogarth uses to introduce the socially-minded tune "A Voice from the Past") and no trips backstage; this isn't a portrait of a band, but a showcase for their on-stage talents.

And what talents. All five bandmates are at the top of their game (and with great deference to the rest of the group, there's just nothing like watching the always mellow guitarist Steve Rothery blast out one of his trademark solos). The set list features classics that always sound best live. And energy is high throughout the concert, building, as all great shows do, to one hell of a finale: their epic rocker "King" leads into the lighthearted party of "The Release" and then to "Neverland," a sweeping roller coaster of emotion that encapsulates the Marillion sound in just over nine jaw-dropping minutes: powerful, over-the-top, and just about as perfect as music can get.



The DVD

Previously offered to fans exclusively through Marillion's website, "Somewhere in London" is now available in wide release. The two-disc set finds both discs housed in a single-wide keepcase; the first disc features the two-hour concert film, and the second disc contains a selection of bonus performances.

The songs featured in the concert film, in order of performance, are: "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," and "Neverland."

As with all Marillion DVD releases, this one is a Region 0 release, playable worldwide.

Video & Audio

The concert looks downright vibrant in this 1.85:1 anamorphic widescreen transfer. Colors are rich and blacks are deep, and as Sidwell's camera crew gets up close and personal, the detail is wonderfully crisp. (Was this shot in HD video? It sure looks it.)

Recorded and mixed live by Michael Hunter (mixer for *Marbles* and producer for *Somewhere Else* and the upcoming *Happiness is the Road*), the show sounds as alive as possible in 5.1 surround, which keeps most of the music up front (where it belongs in such a concert project) while allowing the rear channels to deliver a nice range of atmosphere. A 2.0 stereo mix is also provided, and it, too, sounds spectacular.

Extras

The bonus performances are divided into two sections. "Here's Some We Played Earlier" collects all the songs performed over the two nights that did not get used for the concert film; as with the film, these "outtakes" (for lack of a better word) have been edited together to give the appearance of a single show. Fans can argue over which of these songs should've made the final movie, but having them here is a nice consolation prize.

The songs, in order, are: "Ocean Cloud," "Afraid of Sunlight," "Beautiful," "Most Toys," "Estonia," "Sugar Mice," and "Easter."

As with the film, this is offered in 1.85:1 anamorphic widescreen, with both 5.1 and 2.0 audio.

"Racket Rehearsals" was recorded in the cramped spaces of the Racket Club, the band's fabled hangout/recording space in Buckinghamshire. Last year, the band held a contest in which the winners got to visit them as they rehearsed for the tour. Recorded April 1, 2007 - shortly before *Somewhere Else* was released - this visit was a chance for the lucky fans to hear new material for the first time, and to hear a few favorites performed on an intimate scale. This featurette (in which drummer Ian Mosley sadly remains hidden behind sound barriers) includes complete performances of: "The Last Century for Man," "Estonia," "Neverland," "Faith," and "See It Like a Baby."

Also included in this feature are interviews with band members and fans, who obviously had the time of their lives. Presented in 1.78:1 anamorphic, with 2.0 audio.

Finally, four songs from *Somewhere Else* - "The Wound," "A

Voice from the Past," "No Such Thing," and "Somewhere Else" - are offered up as 5.1 remixes that give the songs a rich, deep sound.

Final Thoughts

If you're a Marillion fan, this one's a no-brainer, a welcome addition to a collection already overstuffed with terrific live performances. To newcomers, it's still quite **Highly Recommended** as a rousing introduction to the band that tops them all in the studio - and they're even better on stage.

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