



ALT.CULTURE.GUIDE CD PLAYLIST

[MONDO
HOME](#)[CD/DVD
PLAYLIST](#)[READING
LIST](#)[FEATURES](#)[COLUMNS](#)[REV.K'S
BLOG](#)[FREE
MUSIC!](#)

[PENDRAGON - *The History: 1984-2000*](#)

Review by Rev. Keith A. Gordon, copyright 2006

For over twenty years, British neo-prog stalwarts Pendragon have bucked commercial trends in favor of exploring the classically-minded, folk-influenced style originally forged by bands like Genesis, Strawbs and Renaissance. Unlike contemporaries Marillion, Pendragon has never achieved a great amount of chart success in the UK, but rather are revered by loyal audiences in countries like France and Poland. Neither band ever made much of a splash with American prog-rock aficionados, but in Pendragon's defense, there hasn't been a lot of their music made available to audiences on this side of the pond. Originally released exclusively in Poland and enjoying a brief US release back in '01, *The History: 1984-2000* has been compiled from a half-dozen Pendragon albums and should whet the appetite of stateside proggers to seek out the band's other excellent work as import discs.



The History: 1984-2000 is a fine showcase of Pendragon's chosen milieu. Although guitarist/frontman Nick Barrett and keyboard wizard Clive Nolan, along with bassist Peter Gee and drummer Fudge Smith, are all superb musicians, it is the band's enormous musical chemistry that drives these songs. Although some jaded U.S. prog fans may find Pendragon's unique sound to be less aggressive than they like, with less emphasis on technical virtuosity and more importance placed on the song, these four gifted artists are incredible musicians nonetheless. Pendragon reminds me a lot of early-70s Pink Floyd, with each song's lyrics, structure and underlying soundtrack considered above mere instrumental interplay. As such, mesmerizing tunes like "Total Recall" or the eerie medieval "The Black Knight" represent a finely crafted combination of intelligent, imaginative lyrics and unpredictable musical composition.

Pendragon's *The History: 1984-2000* includes two haunting acoustic performances of songs from early albums, "The King Of The Castle" and "Paintbox," that were recorded exclusively for this volume. Stripped of electricity, the songs are redefined as soaring folk ballads with a pastoral edge. The album also includes an ultra-cool performance video of "The Last Waltz" culled from the band's 1997 album and DVD *Live At Last!* that you can watch on the old computer. *The History: 1984-2000* is an excellent introduction to the many charms of Pendragon, and hopefully the band will receive its overdue welcome from American audiences so that we can see more of their work reissued stateside. ([Metal Mind/MVD Audio](#))

(Click on CD cover to go to relevant page on [Amazon.com](#))
