

h (Steve Hogarth)

Just imagine: you're a member of a reasonably succesful band, you sell enough records, you have quite some fans, but you can't use all of your musical talent in that [Marillion's] music. So what do you do? Exactly, you make a CD by yourself. Or, as Steve Hogarth, lead singer of symphonic rock band Marillion, says: 'I wanted to experiment a bit with musicians and music which I'm not commonly associated with. I wanted to discover new musical areas with them for me.'

And so he called people like Dave Gregory, XTC's guitarist, and keyboardist Richard Barbieri, a former Japan member and now in Porcupine Tree. 'I really worked terrific, with my own favourite musicians.' says a satisfied Steve. The CD contains a lot of quiet, synthesizer-oriented tracks, in which Hogarth's voice takes the centre spot. Even more so than with Marillion, he shows himself to be a true singer/songwriter, in the tradition of people like Jackson Brown. Experiments have not been shunned, as is shown by the big input of the Brazilian percussionist Luis Jardim. Often, the music is so unconventional it's hard to classify. The band was called H, the album *Ice Cream Genius*. Steve: 'When the producer, Craig Leon, really went crazy about something, he used to shout 'I scream genius on that!'. And while thinking about an album title I kind of liked this phonetical word joke.'

To promote the CD, H tours Europe this month, but with what line-up? 'Richard Barbieri will certainly come along, as wil Dave Gregory, unless XTC hits the studio again. Should that happen, I'll take Aziz along, a guitarist who also played in The Stone Roses. But I'm quite positive they'll all come along.'

No matter what, de Melkweg will be filled with critics and most of all Marillion-fans. Steve doesn't realy mind that. 'As long as they give my solo-album an honest chance.' On the other hand, H also has another, not unimportant, goal, according to Steve: 'I think music lovers should listen well to Marillion, because there are a lot of strange and wrong ideas about our music. I hope that, because of my album, people will also listen better to Marillion.'

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Translated by Martijn Buijs from an article in a Dutch magazine