

Interview on Selina Scott Show NBC Super Channel, January 9, 1996

Selina: My next guests are perhaps the most popular conveyors of progressive rock since Genesis formed 17 years ago and named after a book by Tolkien. Marillion consistently top the charts and pack venues across year Europe. They will be playing for us tonight. But first I'm joined by bashful leadsinger and principle songwriter Steve Hogarth

Steve: I'm too shy, I can't listen to this, sorry...

Selina: You seem to be you big in Europe, you've written this new song "Beautiful", you're a talented guy so what do you feel so twitchy about being introduced like that.

Steve: I don't know, it's just always amusing to be talked about in one's own presence. And the whole progressive rock thing, too, you know. Other people are more conscience of it then we are. We don't really feel like we're any kind of band or that we have to hit the market

Selina: You don't move on? You don't think "How are we gonna target this new audience?". You're big in Easter Europe for example. You don't think we've got this potentially huge audience, let's think of how we can play to them?

Steve: There's no harm in going and playing to them physically, doing the shows there, getting in front of them and this is how we are. But I think there's something terribly dishonest about manufacturing a product for a market. I don't think that's art, I don't think it's great, people will think it's a factory process. Most people who work in factories dream of being in rock and roll so you wouldn't want to turn it into a factory product.

Selina: And what about comparisons with other rock and roll bands? Your work is highly competitive, it's who's gonna get the single, who's gonna get the highest rated album. It's all that kind of stuff. Getting the right guys out there to promote you, all of that, that's pretty tough as well? You can't operate in a total vacuum, can you?

Steve: Well, you can, but to some extent. If you got a lot of people who believe in you because of what you've done all along you're not bound by the next big single to some extent. the pressure isn't on to have another hit. And that has to do with the target you set yourself as well. I suppose when Sting gets up in the morning and thinks "well, I gotta write another number one", maybe he doesn't, maybe I'm doing him a disservice, but we don't really think like that at all. We just think "well, we're going to write something good", and if it charts that's terrific and if it doesn't, well nevermind. There's a big enough fanbase out there to pay the rent and to get by and make the next record. We were talking about mortality before we went on air, one day we're all gonna be dead on a slap so the wonderful thing about being in a band and doing this professionally is that you get to leave something behind. And you're a fool if you leave something behind which isn't a part of you and is just an experiment to make money. You might as well leave something behind you felt strongly about at your own emotions and sensitivities wrapped up in it.

Selina: Afraid of Sunlight is basically that, isn't it? It's looking back at people's lifes, there are icons throughout the album, the poeple who've fallen John Lennon, O.J. Simpson, all these kind of guys, Elvis. What was going on in your head when you decided you wanted to write about these people and write music that picked up the themes of those icons?

Steve: Two really important things happened during the brave tour, which was the tour of the album before this one. First of all we did a show in Munich at the Terminal Eins which is the old airport terminal in Munich. When we arrived to play someone told us that the last band to play there was Nirvana, as it turned out that had been their last show. And Kurt Cobain had subsequently gone to Rome and had taken an overdose that cancelled the rest of the tour so as I went on stage to play I was very conscious of the fact

that I was the first person walk the center stage to sing since he had. He wasn't very important to me really, as an artist, but nonetheless I was very struck by the ghost presence of him. Secondly, later on in the tour we had a day off in Paris and it was a Sunday and we were watching the Grand Prix. It was the Grand Prix where Ayrton Senna lost his life. The two things together started me off to wonder, what's it all worth, to be so famous? If it kills you or if makes you unhappy or if you ultimately you take your own life. Or if you screw everything up, O.J. Simpson was in court, Michael Jackson was accused, Liz Taylor never really seems to be happy [in the camera: "sorry, I may be wrong, Liz"]. That's what started it all off. John Lennon getting shot. I happened to see a documentary about Elvis. All these people seemed so unhappy and yet seemed to successful. They were at the top of the pyramid. You got the feeling they hadn't done themselves a huge favor by being so successful. So what's it all worth if you have no peace of mind. So I was trying to analyse that too, selfishly, for myself, because if... [s: the pitfalls are there, aren't they?] Yes! It's like staring at your own future. I don't wanna end up dead on the street with a bottle.

Selina: what about cocaine, what about heroine, what about drugs, what about all these things that have been the downfall of so many rockicons in the past. What about that as far as you are personally concerned?

Steve: As far as I'm personally concerned: I don't take anything, you expected me to say that didn't you? [laughing] [s: no I'm not! I'm not!]. I have the old bottle of beer but if you're a singer first of all, you've got a certain discipline because if you stick stuff up you nose, you haven't got a voice anymore, so there's no point in that. I've never smoked anything in my life. My mom and dad used to smoke when I was a kid and I had a fobia about it, you know, ashtrays and all, the whole thing. So I have the old bottle of beer and I'm famously low tolerant to most stimulants. If I have a drink I tend to giggle and fall over after two bottles of beer. So it is not really for me. But having said that I don't personally feel that any of us have the right to point their finger at someone else and tell them what to do with their lifes and what not to do. We can tell them what happened to us. If I had a heroine problem and had it been hell for me and I'd come through with it I'd be happy to open my mouth to people and say "for godsake don't do this". But to just stand on a box and having had no experience at it, I find is just a little bit too rackuous [sp?] and a bit close to P.R.

Selina: Well, what you stand for and what we're going to hear in a minute or two is your marvelous music, great lyrics. Steve Hogarth, thank you very much indeed.

Steve: Thank you, Selina.

(Beautiful)

Interview on Selina Scott Show NBC Super Channel, April 23, 1996

Selina: When my next guests last appeared we received an extraordinary mail feedback pleading with us to invite them on again. They're the most popular exponents of progressive rock since Genesis and consistently top the charts and pack out their new tour across Europe. Yes, I'm talking about Marillion. They join us now as their new album *Made Again* has. I've got Steve Hogarth here making funny faces...

Steve: I'm not.

Selina: ...not making funny faces, but he looks very colourful.

Steve: It's like this all the time (points at his face which is all smiles. Looks a bit naughty, too)

Selina: What, your making faces?

Steve: No, the face is like this all the time.

Selina: Is it?

Steve: Yep.

Selina: Just impish.

Steve: Yep.

Selina: Just impish. Well just sit here and be quiet...

Steve: Yep (puts his hand to his mouth)

Selina: ...because we want to hear *Made Again*. It's a track from the new album. The album is a live recording of concerts in London, Paris and Rotterdam. Here it is.

(Made Again acoustic)

Selina: Well, that should keep your fans happy for a little while longer. We've got something on the end of the show, too. We're going to hear you play again. These fans really take a lot out of you. You've got to keep on travelling, you've got to keep on moving, keep on giving concerts right around Europe, because of your fans, millions of them out there.

Steve: They're worth it. They're all worth it. We manage to keep going because of them. We're not one of those bands that's all over the radio, all over the TV all the time. We're not like this Britpop fashion craze. We exist because the fans are there. We exist because they believe in us. We try to bear in mind that fact every time we rise and be honest and true and live up to the faith they've got in us. And so, yes, it can wear you out a bit, you know, too much love is definitely not good for you. But they're worth it.

Selina: Well, you're looking good on it all.

Steve: That's because I haven't been out in a while. I've been in a coffin.

Selina: You've been tucked away writing music and lyrics for your new album. Your own solo album as well as all of this. Very surprising.

Steve: Yes, part of the reason we've released the live album at this point is to give the five of us a breather to express ourselves in other ways.

Selina: But how can you express yourself in a different way? There is a quintessential Steve Hogarth, isn't there?

Steve: No, that's definitely me doing my thing with the band. A band is a double-edged sword because when you write together and when you play music together each of the five people have an input and are very involved, and so you end up with a kind of music which is steering a path of consensus between four of five others or however many there are. Unless you're a kind of band where somebody is the boss and tells everyone what to do, and Marillion isn't like that. But again, when you're creative and have a lot of ideas sometimes you wish you could be the boss and tell everyone what to do.

Selina: I knew that was coming out. I had a feeling.

Steve: Megalomania! (laughs) Doing a solo project is a safety valve for all those things that you wanted to do but didn't quite happen because other people didn't like them. You can get them all out the way you want to do them. It's a sort of opportunity for me to explore a completely different area of music. I'm hoping to work with musicians from bands like XTC and Japan and possibly even the Talking Heads. Maybe I shouldn't even say this because I haven't phoned some of these people yet. Spoke out with my big mouth too soon! I want to make a record which is an experiment and which is deliberately in a different universe from Marillion, that is shocking in every way, in the sense of the musicians, the songs, who's going to produce it. I'm talking to a producer called Craig Leon at the moment who likes the songs I've written, and this is the guy that signed the Ramones to Sire Records and then worked with the Talking Heads and then produced Blonde and The Bangles. Recently he has been working on a band called The Fall which is John Peel's favourite band so they're a kind of left-of-centre English band as well. So it's that deliberate desire to throw a curve and dive into another pond.

Selina: What is going to happen, though, if it's so successful that people want you to be performing on your own with your own music. Would you ever think of saying goodbye to Marillion? Would you ever consider getting off the road and doing just what you really, really want to do in your life?

Steve: Well, Marillion is what I really, really want to do, too. There wouldn't be that big a conflict, I suppose, if the solo album happened to be very big, and that isn't really an ambition I have either. I don't particularly want to be top of the pops and not be able to go out. I'd rather make interesting music which is listened to by people who see it for what it is. I don't want a lot of people down in the front row screaming because they've seen me on TV ten nights out of then. But if it was to surprise me and get airplay and do all that, that would be a dilemma. But I think I could fit both in. Phil Collins managed for quite a few years.

Selina: You're going to do another song for us. What is it?

Steve: We're going to do a number completely live in the studio which is quite an old song of us now called Easter which was inspired by WB Yeats and is a little love song for the Irish people.

Selina: You've been looking in Ireland for some venues.

Steve: It's a wonderful country to be sure. "Art is it, it's Art, is it Art you're after" (In Irish accent)

Selina: Well, it was art you were after. And you'll be welcomed with, as they say, open arms. Afraid of Sunlight was listed in the influential Q-Magazine's fifty best albums of 95. It does not impress you, does it?

Steve: I heard the press hated us. So when that happened we went on medication. No really, it's terrific. I almost got the feeling that it was a grudging nod. In the direction of: 'Well, we don't like them yet, but we'd better soften the ground for maybe we like them in a couple of years time'.

Selina: Steve Hogarth, it's been a thrill meeting you again. Thank you very much.

Steve: It was a thrill for me, too.

(Easter acoustic)



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