

## Arts cont'd



### new beginning

by Karen Bliss

Season's End  
Marillion  
Capitol Records

The latest album from Marillion, *Season's End*, is the start of a new beginning for the British epic-rock group known for its Genesis-like sound and the theatrical presence of lead vocalist Fish. After nine years with the band, Fish has left, taking with him the lion's share of comparisons.

Though many believed his departure would be the end of Marillion, the remaining band members had no doubt they would continue on without him and do just fine. It wasn't as if his leaving came as a big shock; they had heeded warning signs and planned for the moment.

"We had a pretty bad time with him on the last tour," keyboardist Mark Kelly recounts. "He was dissatisfied with touring and said he never wanted to tour again. He would alienate himself from the rest of us. He was having trouble with his voice and we'd say, 'You've got to slow down.' So he'd lock himself in his room for three or four days and we wouldn't see him. He'd do this self-inflicted punishment thing and blame us for it.

"By the time we started writing again for the next album, there was this feeling that it was the four of us [rounded out by drummer Ian Mosley, guitarist Steve Rothery and bassist Pete Trewavas] still enjoying working together, and then there was Fish. He would say, 'Oh, I'm looking for a film part. I can't record today,' or 'I'm working with someone else.' So we just figured he didn't want to be in the band any longer, and, as it turns out, that's what happened. So when he left [to pursue a solo career], we had some good music that we knew we wanted to record. It was just a case of the time it would take to find a new singer."

And it did take time. As one can well imagine, audition after audition, demo after demo, uncovered countless Fish-a-likes — definitely not what the band was after. They wanted to get as far away as possible from Fish imitators. They would know the voice when they heard it. And so far they hadn't.

As the search continued for this certain individual, they also met with the conclusion that finding a singer was hard enough, they better not aim their sights too high and expect him to double as a lyricist too (later they would be proved wrong). That's when they enlisted the help of John Helmer to put words to some of the material already written for the new record.

Then, about halfway through the album the tape arrived. The voice belonged to Steve Hogarth. Hogarth had paid more than his musical dues in two bands, the

Europeans which recorded two LPs in the early '80s for A&M, and *How We Live* which made one album for CBS. Neither brought him the attention he deserved. In fact, before the Marillion opportunity came up, he was seriously considering dropping out of the music business altogether.

"When we heard the tape," says Kelly, "we could tell from the music he was singing, which was Steve's own songs, the sound of his voice, everything about him, was right. He could sing; he wrote lyrics and played keyboards. He was the missing piece really. We wanted somebody creative, who could actually contribute something to the band. And we got on great personally as well."

The situation was so ideal that neither party had any worries that Marillion's long-time fans wouldn't welcome Hogarth warmly.

"We weren't thinking about the past," says Kelly. "We were really excited about what we were writing and we started recording it and looking forward to the future."

Hogarth holds the same point of view. "From the moment we sat down to write and put the songs together for this album," he says, "the process was extreme, there was a great deal of spark, ideas flying around almost faster than we could put them together. There was a great sense of renewed spirit. It left me without too much to worry about. I got the feeling that we were just a band and whatever happened in the future, I was now one of them."

And that's exactly how fans have responded to the "new" Marillion on the *Season's End* tour all over Europe, the U.K. and North America.

### courage is mature



by Brian Tait

National Velvet  
Courage  
Intrepid

O.K. I'll admit it. I like this band. Last year's self-titled album was surprisingly strong and the singles "Flesh Under Skin" and "Pacifist at Risk" brought some well-deserved commercial success for this Toronto act. National Velvet combined hard-edged rock with moody pieces such as "Meat My Match," and the results were quite effective.

Solid songwriting aside, the draw of National Velvet is undeniably Maria Del Mar's magnificent and unique vocals, characterized by its depth and range which extends considerably beyond the paper-thin vibes of many of today's acts.

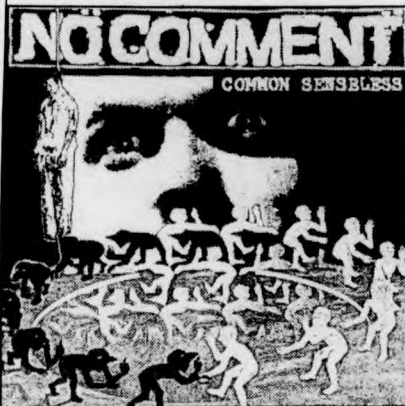
Although the first two songs on *Courage* leap off the disc with formidable power and "(A Place Called) Hysteria" brings it down with a nice touch, the rest of side one does not do much

# platter chatter

Side two, on the other hand, is well-rounded and shows Del Mar in fine form on "6,000 Miles" and "First One." The songs are more elaborate and textured.

The full production on *Courage* is indicative of maturation of the band. Although the keyboard is overstated in places, the album is still able to capture the feeling of the band which is in its element putting on exceptional live shows. Overall, *Courage* secures National Velvet as one of Canada's up and coming acts.

### stop'n' go hardcore



by Stephen Perry

No Comment  
Common Senseless  
Snare Dance Records

Just when you thought vinyl was being replaced by the CD, it happened. The 7" is making a comeback, this time in the independent music scene. In the era of revivals, why not? However, rather than a passing fancy, this trend is based on financial reasons. One of the most recent examples that sticks out in the flood of 7" is the *No Comment* ep, *Common Senseless*.

To make comparisons would be pointless, especially in hardcore, because all too often one band sounds like the next to the untrained listener. But *No Comment* really do it for me, from the moment I laid that needle into the wax. *No Comment* are to contemporary hardcore now what D.R.I. was in the early days. Speed, but with quirky little time changes to challenge the listener. And the changes come so quick. If I were to compare this band to anybody it would have to be Stark Raving Mad. They pack so much into a record that you have to listen to it again and again and again.

Now if this record came out seven years ago, there would be nothing special about it. However, it is 1990 and everybody and their brother is in a band that sings about getting in touch with their emotions. Real concerns about issues and problems have been replaced by aspirations of overproduction. The exception in *No Comment*, and it's a refreshing break. All the raw energy of '83 served up 1990 style. Stop'n go hardcore to the hilt pushing nine compositions on one slab.

Although I don't agree with all s in their lyrics, I find that they are straightforward. They succeed at getting their point across, whether it be the respect for a pluralist society

with a "World of Difference" or their outrage with vivisection expressed in "In the Name of Stupidity." And their effective use of metaphors like "Farmer Hitler John" and "For Tomorrow's Sake" as song titles, would make M.D.C. fans proud.

You won't find this in any major record chain stores as this is a do-it-yourself project. Another fine example of the politics of independence brought into practise. But you can buy copies from the band for \$3 (this even includes postage). Write to Andy Beattie at P.O. Box 57332, Sherman Oaks, Ca., 91413, U.S.A. Keep the boycott alive.

### harrington helps himself

by Howard Kaman

Help Yourself  
Mark Harrington  
Toronto Experimental Artists

Call this one Mark Harrington's *Rattle and Hum*.

That's not to say that *Help Yourself* is bad. In fact, it is quite good, and a vast improvement over *Chaos Theory*, Harrington's last tape, released under the name *Afraid of Nothing*.

Harrington has taken a live version of a previous track, an alternate version of another, and 10 new songs to create a warm, thoughtful tape, highly reminiscent of U2's *Rattle and Hum*. Social criticism is the focus, as he comments on the uselessness of rebellion in "Wear Black," male chauvinism in "Man's World" and the vagueness of our world in general in "Age of Ambiguity."

These are difficult topics that Harrington handles with wit and style. In "Wear Black," he sings, "I don't want to wear black anymore/I've forgotten what this ear-ring stood for." He cleverly ridicules "rebels" by emphasizing how meaningless their clothes and rituals are.

If nothing else, Harrington seems a bit confused over whether he should include himself in the musical mainstream. While most of the music is conventional in structure, he also attempts a few unique effects. One example is "Two Years and Counting" in which Harrington has assembled a sound collage somewhere along the lines of the Beatles' "Revolution 9" while another is the appropriately harsh abruptness with which he cuts off a live version of "I Can't Compete."

In a new recording of "Ask Me," which originally appeared on *Chaos Theory*, he has introduced almost military style drums and a smattering of guitar where there was previously only synthesizers.

Likewise, on the instrumentals "Sun on the Lake" and "Sun on the Rocks," he has layered guitars, keyboards and Pink Floydian sound effects to create a calm finish to the tape.

From the colourful, hand-painted tape label to the thoughtful balance of songs to the creative insert with lyrics, Harrington's new tape is a significant advancement from its predecessor.

Now, as long as he stays out of the movies

### hardcore humour



by Stephen Perry

Collateral Damage  
Krazy Krazy World Demo  
Independent

Every so often a band comes along that makes you laugh. Not in the calculated manner of the comedian, but just for what they do. A whole scene of music has developed around this concept of being goofy. I speak specifically of the geekcore scene in Berkeley, that has grown out of the Gilman Street project (a community-run punk club in Berkeley). Collateral Damage is the most recent band to poke their heads out into the hardcore arena with their debut cassette *Krazy Krazy World*.

Collateral Damage draws on the antics of bands like Stinky, Isocracy and nameless others on the Lookout Label. A good example of their humour is the cassette's intro song "Cars" which features the band members doing car noises a cappella. Musically, they borrow a catchy sort of pop-style from bands like Adrenalin O.D. However, C.D. throw in some quirky time changes that remind this reviewer of Palid Retina or a sloppy Victim's Family.

It's the soon-to-be classics like "Listening" which makes this tape memorable. There are 12 songs, some that have a more serious edge than titles like "Voluntary Blindness," "Drunk Driving" and "Man Made Death" would suggest. And the package is made up of an assortment of things, borrowing from the cut and paste collage look that punk bands are known for. Some of the art, however, flirts with the detail of greats like Pushead. The whole package contains information that gets revealed as one unfolds it.

All of this for a mere two American bones (I'm not kidding. That's postage paid too). Tapes can be sought through Jay at 627 Endicott Dr., Sunnyvale, Ca. 94087, U.S.A. So order up.

### straight thrash

by Stephen Perry

Carnal Closet Carnage  
ep  
Carnal Corporations

if Attitude Adjustment ever got Blaine from the Accused to

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