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## A conversation with Greg Lake

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*(Photo courtesy of Paradise Artists)*

### Rock legend talks music and autobiography

Having achieved success in the late 1960s as a member of King Crimson and throughout the 1970s as one third of Emerson, Lake & Palmer, one would think that Greg Lake's solo ventures might sound a bit like one or both of those progressive rock supergroups.

In truth, his first solo album ("Greg Lake") - issued in 1981 - and its successor "Maneuvers" (1983) sound nothing like the famous bands with which Lake is associated. Thanks to some blistering lead guitar

from Ex-Thin Lizzy member Gary Moore and backing from members of Toto and E Street Band sax-man Clarence Clemons, Lake rocks quite hard on both.

The albums have been remastered and reissued as a double-disc set on Manticore Records, a revived imprint of ELP's 1970s label. Four bonus tracks, recorded during the original sessions, have been added.

Lake checked in last week from his home in London to give the backstory on the albums and how he unknowingly formed yet another supergroup in the process.

**TME:** Your first solo album wasn't released until 1981. Why did you wait so long?

**Greg Lake:** Being in a band like Emerson, Lake & Palmer, my time was totally consumed. We were either on the road or in the studio 300 days a year. The pace was so intense, there really wasn't time to devote to making solo records. It was only after we finished recording "Love Beach" (1978) that I was able to take some time to work on the Greg Lake album.

**TME:** I think many people think of you as the more acoustic-minded, ballad-oriented member of Emerson Lake & Palmer. For these records, you went in a totally different direction.

**Lake:** A lot of that has to do with the musicians. There was such a great band on these albums. Top class players like Gary Moore on guitar and Steve Lukather and Jeff Porcaro of Toto.

**TME:** How did you come to work with Gary Moore?

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**Lake:** I wrote a song with Bob Dylan called “I Love You Too Much.” When it came time for the guitar solo, I wanted someone who could play a blisteringly-fast, over-the-top guitar solo. That isn’t really my style, so I asked my manager who we might get to do it. As luck would have it, he had just been working with Gary so we called him up and he came in. Gary being Gary, he was just stunning. That’s where it started. He and I kept talking about guitars and he joined the band. We were together for a couple of years there.

**Dow:** What about the guys from Toto? How did you meet them?

**Lake:** I had been recording the last ELP record in Nassau in the Bahamas. I moved from there to Los Angeles and I met with them because I needed a band for my first solo record. They were happy to do it and no greater band could you wish for. It was a real joy working with them. They are masters of music - recording especially.

**TME:** In the past, you’ve referenced your autobiography, but we haven’t seen it yet. What is the status on that book?

**Lake:** (Laughing) I have now completed it. The problem was, I would be talking to somebody like you and you would bring something up that I would realize had to be in the book. I would go back and insert it and the book just grew and grew and grew. It’s pretty much finished now and we’re making a film to accompany it. The whole thing will be called “Lucky Man” and it will tell the story of my entire life.

**TME:** Soon, radio stations will be playing your single “I Believe in Father Christmas” from 1975. That song has been accused of being anti-Christmas but I’ve never heard it that way. To me, that song has always sounded like a longing for the return of the Christmas magic that we felt as children. Am I close at all?

**Lake:** You are absolutely right. Actually, both parts are true. It’s a song about the over-commercialization of Christmas. Where you’re right is that the song is in favor of peace on earth and goodwill to all men. That’s the meaning of Christmas to me. Over the last 20 years especially, Christmas has become almost entirely commercialized. That was the protest, really, behind the song. And it just caught on.

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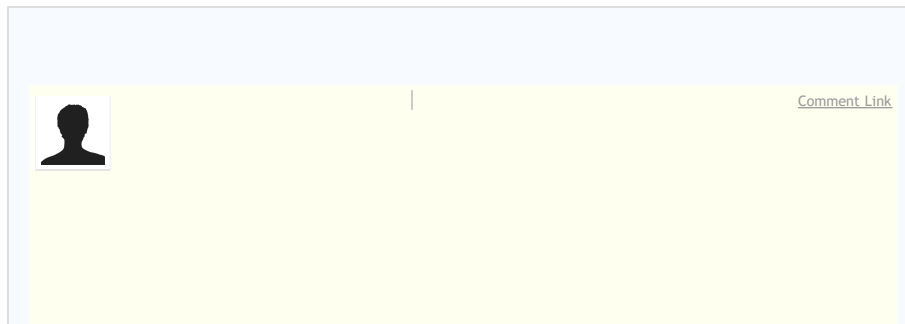
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oh my, have i missed greg. it seems all elp news has been, well, to find appropriate wording, down. with the rerelease of trilogy, and hopefully more news to follow, i am unbelievably excited to see if elp returns to the public eye since march (RIP keith emerson)

