

Doc Showbiz



BY SCOTLAND'S No1 SHOWBUSINESS WRITER, GAVIN DOCHERTY

Greg recognises that the show will eventually end

ONE of the nicest guys in rock music could well become one of the oldest still out there performing. A fact that is not lost on Greg Lake as he prepares for a national tour.

The singer/songwriter of King Crimson, and Emerson, Lake and Palmer, has titled the gigs *Songs of a Lifetime*, and they will be book-ended with an autobiography out in the New Year.

"I am at the back end of my career," the 62-year-old, reflects. "Even writing the book sometimes feels a bit like an obituary. I hope I don't die anytime soon."

After all his years of musical confessions, Greg still has secrets to get off his chest. Thus, he has

embarked on a solo effort in which he will be paying tribute to his musical influences and sharing anecdotes. He will also be open to comments and questions from the audience.

"It is not one

of those legend-in-his-own-lunchtime, sitting-on-a-stool-strumming shows," he offers defensively. "It is highly produced, dramatic, very loud at times, shocking as well."

The music ranges from The Beatles' *You've Got To Hide Your Love Away* to Elvis Presley's *Heartbreak Hotel* and the Johnny Kidd and the Pirates' *Shakin' All Over*. He will probably be talking a bit about touring with Ringo Starr a few years ago, an instructive experience for a rocker once famous for his taste in exotic cars.

"I learned from him the fact that material things do not have any value, really," Greg muses. "You don't own anything, ultimately. You have it for a while and you die and then someone else has it." So

speaks a rocker who survived the alcohol and cocaine-fuelled years while the likes of Jimi Hendrix succumbed.

"I was very lucky not to have died when a lot of the other guys did, because I was always doing the same stupid stuff they were," Greg muses. "One of my saving graces is that I have never looked upon myself in any sense as being any sort of star or special person. I was

just very lucky to have picked up the guitar at the age of 12."

Greg is not interested in preserving his rock-star myth. Instead, it almost seems as though he wants to undercut it.

He says: "I have nothing to fear. No skeletons in cupboards. I own my own copyright so I am sorted financially. People always think I make millions every year from the Christmas song (*I Believe In Father*

Christmas) but that is not true." In his other day job he plays with Express Newspapers owner and chairman Richard Desmond's RD Crusaders. "We play for charity," Greg explains. "It gives Richard a chance to play the drums. God bless him, he's not bad."

●*Greg Lake Songs of a Lifetime, the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh and Clyde Auditorium, Glasgow November 15 and 17.*

