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**Greg Lake - The Arcada Theater, St. Charles, IL 5/12/12**

Calling his tour "The Songs of a Lifetime," **Greg Lake** couldn't pick a more descriptive and accurate moniker. Lake is celebrating his life of music and influences through songs, anecdotes, and stories. This was the one-man show. The man in question, Greg Lake of course, and various instruments he chose to present the songs through. Mostly guitars if you haven't already guessed.

Greg Lake is the legendary voice of King Crimson and Emerson, Lake & Palmer. His contributions to rock/progressive music are undeniable, and well acknowledged. Tonight however, Greg Lake, was trying to recapture the last 40 years of his artistic life in one single evening. It was a monumental task, perfectly executed by Lake. His voice still (turned everyone on..) in perfect shape, and his instrumental skills second to none. Lake sounded great, and played beautifully. Backed up by the pre-recorded tracks, he was able to create a very special and intimate mood.



The songwriter told many interesting stories behind many of the songs he chose to play. It was absolutely great to hear him perform King Crimson's "Epitaph," and "I Talk To The Wind." Two very significant and important songs in the history of rock. Many claimed it was the highlight of the evening, but there were many. Lake had a lot of fun, his Elvis Presley story was absolutely hilarious, and his version of the King's "Heartbreak Hotel" was sharp. Greg Lake was very generous acknowledging his influences of Elvis Presley, and The Beatles. He recalled his time touring with Ringo Starr, and treated everyone to his version of "Hide Your Love Away." Before you knew it, it was the intermission time.



Greg Lake returned shortly after with "Touch and Go," a very strong track from the one-time venture as Emerson, Lake & Powell back in 1986. The second part of the show was split between music, and a question-answer time. Members of the audience were allowed to ask questions, and Greg Lake would provide the answers. Many answers made up for some great trivia regarding King Crimson or ELP. As a result of one of the questions, Lake, performed "I Believe in Father Christmas," his infamous holiday song. A nice unplanned surprise, especially in the middle of May. The evening wouldn't be complete without Lake's beautiful ballads such as "C'est La Vie," "Still... You Turn Me On," or "From The Beginning," which appeared at various time slots throughout the evening.

Lake climaxed with his signature "Lucky Man," a song he wrote as an absolute beginner, but later reworked when ELP needed one more track to complete their first album. The tune was accompanied by a great story, describing the recording process of the track, quite funny actually. It's absolutely amazing how songs that were meant to be fillers become life defining classics, but it's not the first time that happened. Greg Lake exited with a very moving version of "People Get Ready," only to encore with "Karn Evil 9," an ELP track containing the instantly recognizable, "welcome back my friends" line.



Greg Lake delivered a spectacular show at The Arcada Theater. It was great to see him finally back on stage again. His body of work legendary. Many of these songs defined what rock music was in the 70s, and they certainly stood the test of time. The audience still wants to hear this material 40 years down the line, and that says a lot. Greg Lake brought the magic back!

Mark Kadzielawa