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## [Concert review: Corky Laing and Greg Lake tell their stories](#)

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*Photo of Greg Lake by Graham Hughes/ The Gazette. See Graham's photo gallery from the show [here](#).*

*(SPOILER ALERT: The set list for Greg Lake's April 12 show at the Gesu follows this review. If you have tickets for the April 13 performance and surprise is important to you, read no farther.)*

It really is all in the approach.

Although the one-man storytelling-and-music shows Corky Laing and Greg Lake brought to Montreal this week share a veteran-rocker-looks-back focus, the two musicians have surprisingly little in common. Montreal's own Laing is best known for his tenure in the heavy rock band Mountain, while Lake is loved by progressive rock fans everywhere – especially in Quebec, the prog-rock capital of the world.

Their personality differences were also made manifest in their delivery: In the first of his two Best Seat In the House shows Wednesday night, Laing came off as cynical, brash and glib – even about the murder of his ex-bandmate Felix Pappalardi – as he regaled the crowd filling the 80-capacity Upstairs Jazz Bar & Grill with war stories about the music business and rock legends. In the first of two nights showcasing his new Songs of a Lifetime concert at the Gesu, Lake was gentlemanly, warm and emotionally engaged.

Laing's weapon was mostly words, with seemingly much free associating. Lake's attack was more linear and favoured music. (They both, however, made a point of name-dropping Jimi Hendrix.)

Laing, who grew up in N.D.G., reminisced about his early days with Bartholomew Plus Three, performing

with Mountain, the little money he made from co-writing Mississippi Queen, his friendship with the certifiable Keith Moon and a fling with porn star Marilyn Chambers, among other things. A few times, he drew diagrams to illustrate a point and occasionally picked up a guitar or sat behind the drum kit.

Lake's show had the heart. Without question, it took some getting used to the fact that his full-band backing was entirely pre-recorded, but once you made the mental adjustment, there was plenty to enjoy. Alternating between acoustic and electric guitars and bass, with a keyboard number at the end, Lake was singing to the choir: a worshipping crowd that poured out its love during a question-and-answer session in the show's second half.

Between classics from his King Crimson days, covers of songs by artists that mattered to him and, of course, some Emerson, Lake and Palmer milestones, Lake spoke of his life, his bandmates and his career. Among the highlights were a beautifully-told story about seeing Elvis live for the first time, a shaky anecdote about Robert Fripp frightening him in a Jack the Ripper getup and a gripping account of how Lucky Man came to be the recording his fans love.

"Music passes from one soul into another," Lake said in response to a question from the audience. "That's why I'm in music." And the room full of believers at the Gesu understood that completely.

Greg Lake set list:

1. Moonchild (before entrance)
2. 21st Century Schizoid Man
3. Lend Your Love to Me Tonight
4. Shakin' All Over
5. From the Beginning
6. Heartbreak Hotel
7. Epitaph/ In the Court of the Crimson King
8. I Talk to the Wind
9. You've Got to Hide Your Love Away

INTERMISSION

10. Touch and Go
11. Trilogy
12. Still ... You Turn Me On

Question and answer period

13. Bold As Love
14. C'est la vie
15. Lucky Man
16. People Get Ready

ENCORE

17. Karn Evil 9

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