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[Greg Lake – Songs of a Lifetime \(2013\)](#)

by [Nick DeRiso](#)

Greg Lake offers something greater than mere retrospective here — though, certainly, there are familiar tunes from King Crimson and ELP. With its powerful sense of reminiscence, *Songs of a Lifetime* ultimately becomes a more personal journey.

Lake tells stories, witty and filled with disarming humor, even as he weaves in songs from throughout his youth — there's Elvis, the Beatles, Curtis Mayfield — to complete a touchingly autobiographical portrait. *Songs of a Lifetime* is like an audio book, narrated by the subject and smartly embellished with a series of relevant contextual tracks.

[**ONE TRACK MIND:** [Greg Lake stopped by for an in-depth talk on key tracks from King Crimson's debut, his celebrated stint with Emerson Lake and Palmer, and his solo career.](#)]

So, you'll probably arrives at this itching to drink in new renditions of Emerson Lake and Palmer cuts like "In the Beginning," "Still You Turn Me On" and (of course) "Lucky Man," but chances are you'll stay for the times when Lake moves farther afield of expectations. There's story about slipping off to Lake Tahoe to see Presley, during a day off from an ELP tour, and the wonder that elicited. Or the image of Lake, trying in vein to learn all of the Beatles' songs in advance of his stint with Ringo Starr's All-Starr band a few years back. A fuller, far more approachable image of Lake begins to emerge.

Interestingly, though Lake appears alone, the evening isn't limited to solo acoustic numbers, either. A gorgeous orchestral gust billows up around his take on "Court of the Crimson King." (His recollection about growing up with Crimson's Robert Fripp, and how they started the band, also provides new perspective on that period.) ELP bandmate Keith Emerson's familiar synth runs elevate Lake's brusque rendition of "Touch and Go," and Emerson's swirling organ fills from "Karn Evil No. 9" remain, too.

Still, it's perhaps no surprise, given the rangy nature of this concert experience, that the highlight of *Songs of a Lifetime* emerges not from Lake's own repertoire but from something heard on the radio in his youth. "People Get Ready," the gospel-inflected 1965 anthem from Mayfield and the Impressions, is now perfectly suited for Lake's aged and oaken voice — and for this night, as offbeat as it is emotional.

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