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## Greg Lake Rocks The Arcada Theater To Their Feet!

by rockchicago

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First of all, let me preface this review with some personal information about me. I am an aging, soon to be 60 year old, prog rocker. I have been a huge Greg Lake fan since the King Crimson days when his voice just absolutely enthralled me. I would attend any ELP concert I could and I have all his music CDs (KC, ELP, solo work) as well as any DVD he (or ELP) had released. I feel this makes me uniquely qualified to review this concert.

That stated, I was a bit concerned about this concert as his voice had aged and on some recent recordings had seem rough and raspy to me so I was not too sure if that would be a source of disappointment for me. In addition, I learned that the concert was to be a “one man show” with no band accompaniment, rather taped backing music tracks.

To add to my fears, when Greg Lake walked onstage to rousing applause, there was no microphone in stand! So he walked offstage until they could correct the foul-up. When he came back out and he began to sing all my fears dissipated. He opened with “Lend Your Love to Me Tonight” from Works Volume 1, one of my favorites (which I had never heard him perform live), and his voice was outstanding, clear and strong. I did not even notice the lack of the band as the backing music blended seamlessly. I was in Heaven.

As the concert was termed “Songs of a Lifetime” he took us on a journey through his musical life. He performed songs from all stages of his career, including King Crimson, Emerson, Lake and Palmer, even throwing in some Elvis (“Heartbreak Hotel”) and a Beatles audience sing-along (“You’ve Got to Hide Your Love Away”) and closed with a spiritual (“People Get Ready”) with Greg playing keyboards, which I had never seen him do before!

As it was a solo show he spent a great deal of time interacting with the audience. In between songs he would reminisce about various aspects of his career and it turns out he is quite a story teller. He had a warm and engaging manner (I had seen many of his interviews so I knew this to be so). He told an amusing story about seeing Elvis in concert during an ELP tour. However, the highlights for me were his stories about the origin of the first King Crimson cover artwork, the woman pictured on the ELP Brain Salad Surgery album (she was a hooker) and the story behind the creation of “Lucky Man” (which he had originally written as a twelve-year-old).

Another fascinating segment of the concert was when he took questions from the audience. I could have listened to him tell

his stories all night. One person asked him about “I Believe in Father Christmas” which engendered an interesting story about it’s creation/meaning and led to him performing the song as well.

However, as interesting his recollections and audience participation were, the evening was all about music and he delivered. As he was in good voice each song was a treasure to hear. He performed the usual classic hits “Still You Turn Me On,” “C’est La Vie,” “Lucky Man,” “In the Beginning,” and “Touch and Go.”

But as great as those songs were, my personal highlights were his performance of the classic King Crimson songs “Epitaph” (always one of my favorites), “Court of the Crimson King,” and “I Talk to the Wind.” An outstanding sequence of songs and the audience vociferously agreed! What was also very interestingly done and what absolutely intrigued me was his new take on the ELP classic “Trilogy.” He performed the first half of the song, but sang it as a love ballad and did that work! Another highlight.

He closed the show with the spiritual “People Get Ready,” setting a mellow mood, but when he came back for his encore “Karn Evil 9 (First Impression Part 2)” which is better known as “Welcome Back My Friends,” he was playing his thundering bass and had the audience on their feet in a state of frenzy. What a great way to end an outstanding concert.

I would also like to mention that I took part in the “Meet and Greet” after the concert. Greg Lake was a total gentleman treating each and every participant with total respect as he signed items and took pictures with each one. He made each of us feel very special. I felt like I was in the presence of rock royalty.

In addition, the venue, Arcada Theater, was a great place to see this show. It had an intimate setting and the sound quality was superlative. At intermission they had drawings for the audience with a variety of prizes. The grand prize was a guitar autographed by Greg Lake. I later found out the person who won it was so overcome when he received it he wept! The management team there is a class operation. I will definitely go back to see concerts there.

Reviewed by Peter S. Sakas on 5/12/12

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• *Steve Unton*

May 17, 2012 4:30 pm

Sorry I missed it. Sounds like it was fantastic.

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