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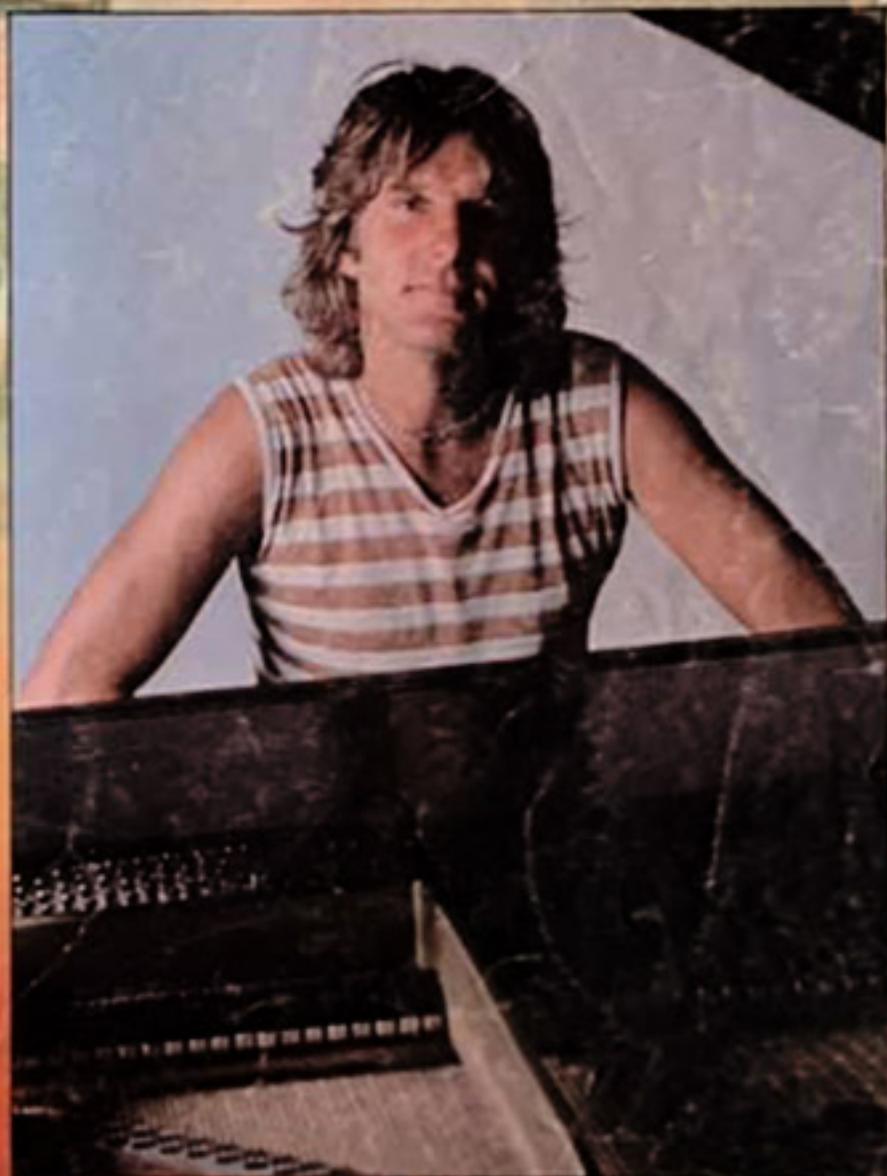
KEITH EMERSON

ROCK'S MULTI-KEYBOARD
KING — THEN & NOW

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**CK's FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY**
HIGHLIGHTS & HISTORY
A SPECIAL SELECTION



ALTHOUGH HE HASN'T appeared in concert for three years, and although the last three albums released by his now-defunct band were far less than artistic triumphs, leaving only an Italian import disc to represent him fairly or adequately, Keith Emerson has lost none of his legendary lustre in the eyes of his legions of fans. Not many keyboardists can command this kind of loyalty, but it has been clear from the beginning that Emerson was no ordinary keyboardist. His early work with the Nice and subsequent superstardom as the lead instrumentalist of Emerson, Lake & Palmer made him the idol of an entire generation of young rock keyboardists. What they found in Emerson was confirmation that a keyboardist could indeed be as powerful a musical force and as charismatic a stage presence as a guitarist.

CK's first interview with Emerson, in which he discussed his early career, music, and equipment in depth, appeared in our Oct. '77 issue. At that time he was embroiled in an ambitious undertaking — a concert tour that included a 60-piece symphony orchestra in addition to the three musicians of ELP. The phenomenal cost of putting an ensemble this size on the road, and the failure of audiences to fill auditoriums in the necessary numbers, marked the beginning of the end for ELP.

The tour was intended to support the sale of *Works, Vol. 1* [Atlantic, SD-2-7000], a double album that contained a solo side by each of the three members of ELP — Emerson, bassist/vocalist Greg Lake, and percussionist Carl Palmer — and a single side that was a group effort. Emerson's side was devoted to an original piano concerto (the score of which has been published by Boosey & Hawkes). The band's side contained ELP's arrangement of Aaron Copland's "Fanfare For The Common Man." If you watch ABC TV's *Wide World Of Sports*, you've heard this arrangement, though with a slightly altered instrumentation. The most notable thing about *Works, Vol. 1* was that the band had started to depart from the heavily orchestrated keyboard sound that Emerson had created with his battery of Hammond organs and custom Moog modular synthesizer. Instead, a full orchestra was employed to fill out the sound, and Emerson had switched over to the Yamaha GX-1, a top-of-the-line polyphonic synthesizer. Some hardcore ELP fans loved the change, while others thought the band had lost much of its aggressive energy. In any case, the tour was plagued by various internal and external hassles, and by mid-summer of 1977, ELP were forced to scrap the orchestra and go out as a three-piece unit again to try to recoup their financial losses.

Also in an effort to earn back the vanished funds, ELP released *Works, Vol. 2* [Atlantic, SD-19147], a far less ambitious package that consisted mostly of singles that hadn't been available on LP before. It was a valiant effort, but it wasn't enough, and it reinforced the feeling many people had that the band was in serious trouble.

The coup de grace came, however, with

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the release of *Love Beach* [Atlantic, SD-19211]. The musical power and sophistication associated with the ELP name had vanished, and the personal and financial strains that the members of the band were suffering from were painfully apparent in the music. Shortly after the album's release, ELP officially disbanded. A posthumous live album, *In Concert* [Atlantic, SD-19255], was put together by Emerson from tapes of a set played by the band and orchestra in Montreal during their final tour. The sound quality, for reasons that Emerson explains below, left something to be desired, and CK started getting letters from Emerson fans asking what had happened to a band that at its inception in 1970 was light-years ahead of the competition and was known for its state-of-the-art production techniques.

When the first ELP album [*Emerson, Lake & Palmer*, Atlantic, SD-19120] came out in 1971, it stood out from the crowd of guitar-oriented heavy metal bands like Led Zeppelin, Cream, and Deep Purple that were dominating the airwaves at the time. Along with a level of aggression that appealed to a rock audience, it had such beautiful tunes as Greg Lake's "Lucky Man," which became a number one single and gave millions of listeners their first-ever taste of lead synthesizer. The album also contained two arrangements of classical pieces, thus beginning a tradition Emerson would carry on through much of ELP's output.

Six months later, on June 14, 1971, the second ELP album, *Tarkus* [Atlantic, SD-19121], hit the streets. While the first album had been an attempt to prove what the band was capable of technically, *Tarkus* was the first album, Emerson has stated, in which ELP was playing as a unit. Side one contained the *Tarkus* suite, whose impact on listeners was stunning. At a time when many rock keyboardists were still stuck holding chords under the guitar solo, here was a set of tunes with screaming organ and synthesizer lines cemented together by a driving 5/4 ostinato. ELP was establishing itself as a new musical force, and Keith Emerson was influencing not a few young keyboardists.

On January 4, 1972, *Pictures At An Exhibition* [Atlantic, SD-19122] followed. This was a live recording done even before *Tarkus* that was released in the United States only after the demand for the import copy made it obvious that people cared about what the trio did — even when it was a classical piece like the Mussorgsky title cut that rock audiences weren't supposed to go for. But ELP played *Pictures* with such inspired power

that the album went gold. The fourth album, *Trilogy* [Atlantic, SD-19123], appeared at the end of another six months. It contained another ballad from Lake, "From The Beginning," that became a number one single, as well as ELP's rendition of Aaron Copland's "Hoedown." It was nearly two years before the next ELP opus was released, but it was worth the wait. *Brain Salad Surgery* [Manticore, MC66669], which featured the 30-minute suite *Karn Evil 9*, another Lake single, "Still You Turn Me On," and an arrangement of the fourth movement of Alberto Ginastera's *First Piano Concerto* (retitled "Toccatà"), epitomized everything that ELP stood for. It was perhaps the peak of their output as a trio, and the keyboard work has to be heard to be believed. A triple live album, *Welcome Back My Friends To The Show That Never Ends — Ladies And Gentlemen, Emerson, Lake & Palmer* [Atlantic, MC-3-200] was put out in 1974 — and nothing more was heard from the band for three years, until *Works, Vol. 1* appeared.

And now that ELP is no more, what has become of the keyboardist who has won more awards from CK's Readers' Poll than anyone else over the last five years? What are his plans? Is he putting another band together? What equipment is he using these days? To find out, we talked to Keith by phone at his home in the Bahamas. He told us he was finishing up a new solo album, and considering doing some more film scoring to follow up a recent project, the score for an Italian horror movie called *Inferno*, the soundtrack album of which is available as an import [Cinevox, dist. by Greenworld Records, 23703 Madison St., Torrance, CA 90505].

To our surprise, Keith had just spent two days writing an Open Letter to the readers of CK in answer to the many letters we had forwarded to him (see p. 19). After he had read the letter to us, answering many of our questions in the process, the interview began.

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MANY ELP FANS WERE shocked by *Love Beach* when it came out.

I know—I was opposed to the whole thing. I even organized a survey to find out what people would think. We had people posted at O'Hare airport in Chicago with a little questionnaire, asking people first off, "Have you heard of this band?" and if they said yes, then, "Which of these album titles do you think would suit their next album?" They weren't told what the music would sound like, but they all indicated that *Love*



Beach was at the bottom of the list. So I said to the people at Atlantic Records, "There you go. Doesn't that prove it?" But they were adamant about using that title. In the end I rang up Ahmet Ertegun [president of Atlantic Records] and said, "Look, man, it makes us appear like a bunch of beach boys, which we're not." And he said, "Oh, it doesn't really matter about album titles. What are titles, you know? Look at the name of the Beatles. What does that mean? It doesn't make any difference." So I said, "It makes a lot of difference to me because it doesn't fit the image of this band." But they went ahead anyhow. It's a complete letdown.

It was hard to believe the album was done

by the same band that did Brain Salad Surgery.

I know. It's a bit depressing. I feel there was a certain charm in "Canario." It had almost the same effect as "Hoedown" [from *Trilogy*] or something. And the second side had a kind of a concept about it. The lyrics are a bit gross, but it was all, as I said in the "Open Letter," because everybody but me wanted to get the hell out of Nassau. There were a lot of bad things going down. We'd go into the studio and just rap all day because we hadn't got any music down, and that was it. In the end I stuck the whole album together — nobody else showed up — and sent it off to Atlantic.

That's depressing.

Well, it is depressing. But why not look on the bright side? I'm having a lot of fun down here. The talent in Nassau is just amazing. I've got a bass player that sounds like Stanley Clarke. He does all the bits.

What kind of equipment are you using now?

Here in the Bahamas I've got a Korg 3300 and a Korg 3100 polyphonic synthesizers, a Minimoog, a Yamaha CP-30 electronic piano, a Yamaha upright, and a Korg vocoder. In England, I've got my Yamaha GX-1, which is still my favorite of all the synthesizer equipment. The engineer that we had on the road with us, Nick Rose, has built a system into it so that I can play a Minimoog from the lower manual, so I've got the Minimoog bass sound, which I've never been able to duplicate exactly on any other synthesizer. Nick also built a digital sequencer into it for me. At the moment it will remember about 100 notes, but Nick is going to expand the memory. I don't understand the technical side of it too well, but what Nick has done has thickened up the sound of the GX-1 quite a bit. It was always a bit too thin and lacking in guts for my taste. If you listen to records by Tomita, whom I admire very much, you'll hear the sort of wishy-washy sound I'm talking about. I hear that same sound coming out of the GX-1, but that doesn't stop me from using it. Stevie Wonder called it his dream machine, and it still remains that to me. A lot of people have said it doesn't replace the biting organ sound that I usually got, but I think when you lose a bit you gain a bit too. I've lost that biting quality by using the GX-1, but I've gained a lot of other possibilities. "Fanfare For The Common Man" [from *Works, Vol. 1*] would never have sounded right on the Hammond. The other day I heard someone at a local club playing it on a Hammond and it sounded ghastly. There are certain things that work better on the organ and certain things that work better on the GX-1.

So you've given up playing the organ.

More or less. I've done a recording down here that uses a bit of Hammond, but it's not as wild as in my early days. It's controlled, and it's funky — I hate that word, but that's really the only way to describe it. I'm enjoying playing in a funky context, because it's such a change from the very technical approach ELP took. Carl [Palmer] heard it, and he said it was about time I painted me face black [laughs]. He said I'd been down in Nassau too long. Carl and I still correspond, which is nice. There's a possibility that we might work together again. We've spoken about it, but it's still a long way off. Quite honestly, I'm much happier now that I'm free of the pressure of going to the studio and arguing all the time, wasting all that money on studio time arguing instead of playing music.

How much did you have to do with the production of the earlier ELP albums?

Well, when we did that first album, with "The Barbarian" and "Knife Edge" on it, Greg [Lake] kind of automatically seated himself at the mixing desk. I'd be out there twiddling with the synthesizers or whatever and Greg would be at the desk. When it came time to mix things down, we'd all be in the control room, but Greg, having swiped the chair in

Top to bottom: Emerson at the acoustic piano; recording at Elite Studios in the Bahamas with a Yamaha CP-30 electronic piano, a Hammond B-3, and a Hohner Clavinet; again at Elite Studios with a Korg 3100 polyphonic synthesizer, a Korg 3100 polyphonic synthesizer, and a Sequential Circuits Prophet-5 (also three unidentified music critics offering their comments).



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front of the desk, would still be occupying the position a producer would occupy. We'd all be there to say when we didn't like the sound of something, and we'd all end up with our hands on the faders. We had mutually worked it out that Greg would be credited as the producer, but Greg acknowledged that we were all producing the albums. We'd all do the typical thing, where you know this great lick is coming up and you have to make sure everybody hears it, so you push the fader up all the way for that second or two. And of course, when we heard it back, this thing would come out of nowhere and go *raahhhhh!* over the top, and everybody would look at whoever had done it and give them the evil eye or something. The poor engineer would be riding the master gain fader throughout the mixing session, and after four or five hours he'd have brought it down to nothing because we'd all been trying to make sure our licks got heard, and we'd have to reset the whole board and go back to square one. I guess a lot of bands have that problem.

Why did you duplicate your solo from the original version of "Knife Edge" on the In Concert album?

I think if I had done something different it would have been out of context. The first album sold a lot of copies, and when you make a change in something that's popular, people say it's not right. I first put that excerpt from the Bach French Suite in as an improvisation, and it became part of the arrangement. The idea of using "Knife Edge" on the live album was to include parts of Janáček's original orchestration, with all that heavy brass. "Knife Edge" was the most requested number that we played.

Had that solo been worked out in advance of the first album?

No, it was a one-off thing. Greg was very good at choosing which solos were all right. He always persuaded me in the end. There were times when I'd say, "God, that was terrible, let me play another solo," and he'd say, "No, I like that, let's keep it." So I'd live with it for two days and come to accept it. By the time we were done with the album, there wasn't another solo that could have been more right. The same thing happened in "Fanfare For The Common Man." I always started with the improvised harmonica solo that's on the album, and then to expand it more we'd put in a B.B. King tune, and then of course we added "Rondo" [a 4/4 version of Dave Brubeck's "Blue Rondo a la Turk"], and the whole thing built up to a grand finale.

What drawbar setting did you use in the "Knife Edge" solo?

I was trying to get the Booker T. sound. I think it was one of the presets on the upper manual — A's, maybe?

Your Hammond sound was so distinctive I'd think it would be difficult to duplicate on anybody else's equipment.

You're right. Since my own Hammond is still in England, I've tried to get that sound myself on Hammonds that are available in Nassau, and it's difficult. A lot of my Ham-



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW HARRISON

mond sound may have been due to the fact that it was running into very old beat-up Leslies and Hiwatt or Marshall amps that had been beefed up by a guy named Bill Haugh.

Did you encounter any unforeseen problems when you tackled the film scoring for Inferno?

The only problem we had was that the Italians weren't very accurate on their timing, and we did the score without a click track. Dario Argento had never worked with click tracks before. Godfrey Salmon was used to working with a click track, so it was difficult for him. Godfrey was conducting the whole session, but I had done the composing while working with the video, so I knew every inch of every scene. I knew if the music was falling behind, and I'd push it a bit further. I knew the peak points we had to hit.

How did the film influence your writing?

I didn't want to make it sound like a Hammer Films horror movie score, like *Phantasm*, where you've got the usual rock and roll thing on the soundtrack. I wanted to make it more like the earlier *Dracula* movies, almost a romantic sort of scoring. It may have been a bit too romantic. It may have been more suited to a love story than a horror movie, but I got used to seeing it that way. It gave off a sort of sick feeling, and it worked. And I've always felt that female choirs singing atonal lines are very nice to use in horror movie contexts. When I saw the premiere in Italy I was particularly watching the audience when the choir came in, because I knew it was going to have a strong effect. They jumped! It worked tremendously well.

Is the movie scheduled to come to the States?

Yes. It's being distributed by Twentieth Century Fox, and I understand they'll probably be releasing it in the fall. I've seen that film an awful lot in the course of working on the music, and my opinion is that it's quite silly. I've seen a lot of people throw up watching it, and a lot of people leave in the middle. They were having a big thing down in Cannes for some record people, and my manager Stewart Young went down and showed the movie to a lot of important people. A lot of them left the evidence of what they thought of it in the toilet. But I hope the rating they give it in America will enable kids to see it, because I think it could become a cult movie, something like *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*. It's a film you can be sort of mildly scared by and have a good time. A lot of horror movies have that kind of effect. Nobody likes to admit they're frightened, so they ridicule it. I'm not claiming this movie is as frightening as, say, what Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* is probably going to be.

You used some Rhodes on Love Beach.

Yes. It suited that piece ["Letters From The Front"]. That's about all I can say. I tried that part on every other keyboard, and the Rhodes was what worked.

What about your Korg synthesizers? Any thoughts on them?

Well, I'm still using them. In fact, on the track on the *Inferno* album that has the choir ["Mater Tenebrarum"], the organ sound is actually the Korg, going through an MXR Stereo Chorus, plus a bit of echo. I think it

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An Open Letter From Keith Emerson To The Readers Of Contemporary Keyboard

[Ed. Note: Since the breakup of Emerson, Lake, & Palmer, CK has received many inquiries about Keith Emerson's current activities and plans for the future. A number of readers even wrote to Emerson c/o the magazine. Because he wanted to respond to these people as directly as possible, Emerson composed the following Open Letter.]

AT THE END OF THE LAST American tour as a three-piece unit, we were considering a final separation. It was at the back of all our minds, but was left unspoken. The orchestra tour plagued Greg and Carl as both a financial and artistic disaster — a view I totally disagreed with. I'd read enough from critics that I respected and heard enough from friends to assure myself that it was the contrary. The orchestra was the finest, most dedicated and trusting bunch of people I had worked with in that context. They were as disappointed as I was when they had to disband. We had a lot of fun. We were working on a knife-edged budget which we slid down, dismembering ourselves, which probably explains the lack of balls on the last studio album, *Love Beach*. A last live album remains for people to judge for themselves what we were really like. There is also a film. Although their quality is not exactly state-of-the-art, they remain to mark an exciting peak in my musical career. I felt responsible that after being together for ten years we didn't come out of the band with the kind of financial security that would have been expected from a band of our stature. In fact, we'd hit it pretty low.

Some of our repertoire needed orchestra ornamentation, and when we were playing as a three-piece group I sadly missed that looseness the orchestra gave me. I certainly had my hands full. The tour as a three-piece was long and very hard. We discussed during this last tour what would happen afterward and what possibilities were open to us. One thing was certain: In order to continue, we would have to do a lot of cutting down. We even discussed a piano/bass/drums format. After meeting with Atlantic Records we were finally persuaded to make one more album. Much to my reluctance, a commercial album was suggested, "commercial" meaning we would compress all of the simpler ideas and make them into neat little radio-playable sin-

gles. Since Greg had felt repressed in the area of his writing, I eased up on my opinions to a certain extent, bit my nails, and gave him the freedom he kept asking for on side one of *Love Beach*. Side two, in my opinion, is more pleasing, but because Greg and Carl hated Nassau so much and just wanted to get back home, the end result was very rushed and heartless. The album title and picture were an embarrassment against everything I've worked for.

Afterwards, I decided to pursue an unfulfilled ambition — film scoring. I certainly had no intention of forming another regular band. The idea of writing down what I wanted, selecting my musicians, and going into a studio and recording straight off without all the discussions and arguments I'd been used to greatly appealed to me. I made a few visits to Los Angeles and met with a number of people in film scoring, but nothing came of it immediately. Finally, my manager presented me with a script written by Italian film director Dario Argento, a particularly gory horror movie called *Inferno*. I flew to Italy, where in one afternoon I was shown Argento's past accomplishments, all horror movies, among them *Deep Red* and one of his more successful ones in America, *Suspiria*. I was a little apprehensive as to whether this was the right first movie for me to score, but Dario seemed so open to my musical ideas that I felt very free to try out anything. With that kind of working relationship, I felt it would be ideal for me to gain the experience I needed by working on *Inferno*.

I went back home and worked on composing the music. I got most of my ideas from reading film scores. I made some rough recordings and went back to Italy to be with Dario on the cutting and editing procedures and see if he liked my ideas. We ran my rough cassette against the movieola, after which I threw out some ideas and kept others. I was finally given a video cassette of the finished film minus sound, and I came back to Nassau with Godfrey Salmon (the conductor of the orchestra we had used on the ELP tour) to work on the orchestration. Godfrey has had experience with putting music to movies, and he was invaluable throughout the whole business. One thing that threw us was that there was no click track, so we had to work out the timings by watching the video

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gets quite an effective pipe organ sound. At the moment I really cannot feel confident enough in the Korgs to use them as a main solo instrument. They record too weakly. But I understand the Korg people are working on some changes. They keep telling me to just wait until I hear the new stuff.

What did you use for the bell-like sound on "Taxi Ride" from Inferno?

That was the Korg 3100.

What about the guitar-like solo line?

I think that was the Minimoog going through a flanger.

It's very different for you to play something like that. Does it reflect an interest in jazz-rock?

Well, I've been experimenting with reggae rhythms. Also, I'm hoping to get a junkanoo thing going down here. Junkanoo is a festival sound you'll hear in the Bahamas. It's the sound of percussion, whistles, boards—anything. I'd like to try to make something out of that. Some local guys have been experimenting with it, and it sounded very noisy, but I think if it's controlled it could be a very interesting sound. They have a junkanoo down here at Christmas and New Year's Eve, and if you stand on the street there's an incredible pulsing rhythm. It's different from the other Latin and Caribbean rhythms I've been working with. Usually I've just been

going down to the studio without any prepared stuff and just jamming, because the guys I've been playing with are like — you know, a couple of bottles of wine, and it works wonders [laughs]. Oh, we've had some great times. The other thing I've been trying to get involved in is gospel music. I've been going around to the gospel churches here in Nassau with a tape recorder. One Sunday night I'd finished in the studio, and I took Mott and his assistant Dennis out and we scouted around looking for a church. Down here they really get going on Sunday night. So we were driving down the road, and we heard tambourines and shouting, so we stopped. I had my tape recorder, and I didn't want to disturb anyone, so I just stuck my microphone in the window and sort of observed. But one of the preachers who was standing in the back invited us in, so we kind of dubiously sat in the back with all this raving going on and continued recording. God, those services are incredible! People go into hysterics, and they're laying on hands and writhing around, and then they'll burst into another hallelujah chorus, with hand-clapping and tambourines, and I'm recording all this. At the end of it, everybody sits down in the pews, and the reverend gets up and speaks to the congregation, and he says, "Who are these visitors in the back of the church?" And I just said nothing. He said, "Do you have a spokesman?" I said, "Well, yeah, my name is Keith

and this is my friend Mott and my friend Dennis." He said, "What is your purpose?" I said, "Well, I'm looking to record a gospel choir." He said, "What is your church?" I said, "Church of England," I think, so he said, "I'd like to see you often," and he hugged me hard. He said, "You come along on Wednesday evening. I have just the choir for you." So we went along on Wednesday, and it was no different than before — the raving was even worse! I'd like to write some gospel music.

What about your routine at home? Do you practice regularly any more?

When I'm up very late in the studio, like four o'clock in the morning, it doesn't always happen. But usually I get up in the morning and exercise, and then I come back and practice for two hours. That practice could involve writing, or just practicing things that I feel I need to work on. It's difficult getting a piano I would like down here. I've still got my nine-foot Steinway grand in England. Down here I just have a little Yamaha upright, and if a string breaks or anything you have to wait months to get a new one. And of course it goes out of tune because of the heat and the air conditioning going on and off. I've been using the Yamaha CP-30, the electronic one, and that's fairly reliable.

Do you miss the concert grand?

I do, but at Compass Point Studios they have a seven-foot Yamaha grand that I

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In concert (L to R): Emerson, Lake, and Palmer.





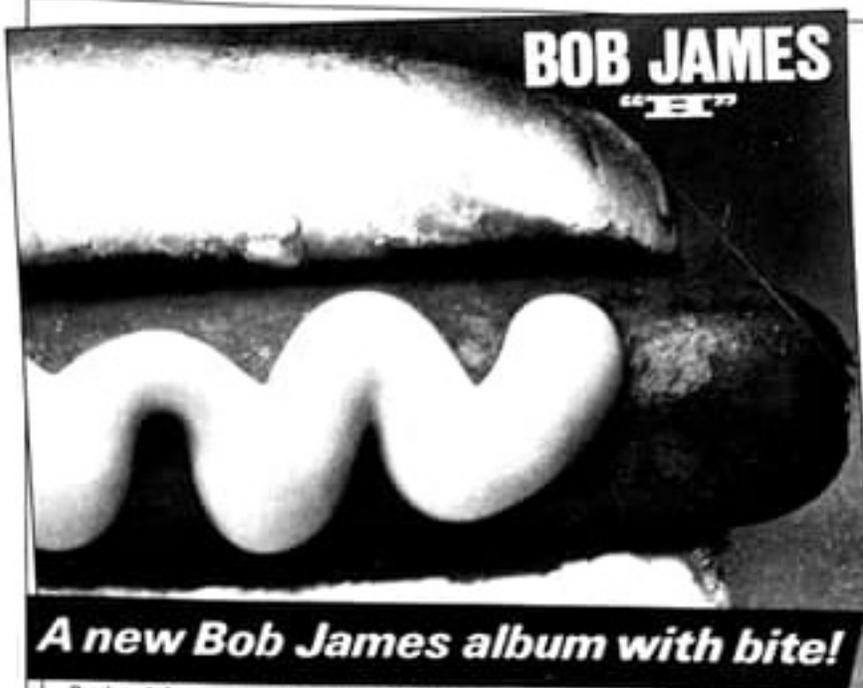
OPEN LETTER

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they'd given us. After playing it through so many times while I played piano, I began to feel when to speed up and slow down. We eventually recorded everything in Italy with an Italian orchestra and choir, all of us playing and watching the film at the same time. The Italians were delighted with the results, and I did various TV promos and went to the premiere. The critics praised the music, but they weren't too kind to Dario. The movie has since been released in France and Germany and plans are being made to release it in America along with a soundtrack album. I recently learned that it won the Italian equivalent of the Academy Award for the soundtrack. It's the first one that the Italians have awarded, as far as I know.

Currently, I am making another album here in Nassau. It's not a solo album — they've all been solo albums as far as I'm concerned — but an album of styles and keyboard playing that I haven't been able to use in the past. I've found it a treat to play with funky players. I've also developed a relationship with a recording studio here — Elite — where I am able to record as much as I want to in exchange for helping them modernize the studio. Some of the players here have to be heard to be believed. Although Elite doesn't have all the luxuries of most recording studios today, their engineer, Mott, and their assistant, Dennis, work wonders getting a sound that fits my needs. As I said, I'm working with the owner, King Eric, in getting the facilities up to modern standards. Things are being brought in, and we hope to get it all together in the coming months. As for the future, I need to feel the call of the road again before I can consider touring. With the recent recession in the rock idiom and the disappointments of some of my past exploits, I feel dubious about conceiving a new baby. True, I have had invitations to perform in a classical context, but after having toured with ELP and our own orchestra, I consider such one-shot concerts as a small part of my output, and until I work out a feasible way of performing my own variable repertoire in the manner to which my audience has become accustomed, I'm concentrating most of my musical efforts in the field of film music.

Keith Emerson



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manage to get quite a good sound out of it. If I find that a piece needs to be played on a larger piano, I just take the tapes down there.

So how often are you actually in the studio?

Nearly every day, since I have this arrangement with Elite whereby I can spend as much time there as I want.

Some of the sports shows on U.S. television use theme music that mimics your arrangement of "Fanfare For The Common Man."

I know about that. My oldest son Aaron came running upstairs one day and said, "Hey, Dad, they're playing your music!" So I ran down, and of course it was the ABC Wide World Of Sports. I listened, and the drum intro was almost exactly like Carl's, but I quickly realized it wasn't us playing. So I had my manager follow it up. The way the story got to me was that ABC had approached Atlantic to use our original version, and Atlantic said, "Yeah, you can use it, but it will cost you." So ABC said, "Well, fuck that, we'll do our own." And the thing is, you cannot copyright an arrangement, so they're perfectly free to do that. I've heard rumors that sometimes they actually use our version, but I don't know whether that's true or not. I can only pick up American TV when the wind is blowing in the right direction, so I have to go on what people tell me. It's very laid

back in Nassau. We don't get the news until months later. Are the hostages still in Iran? Who's the president these days?

You mentioned that ELP was thinking at one time of doing a piano-bass-drums tour. What kind of material did you have in mind for that?

Well apart from "Show Me The Way To Go Home" . . . More material like that, I would think. Simplified things. Actually, there were quite a number of things we could have done. We definitely had to think about cutting down. Carl would have had to use a smaller drum kit, and we would have played smaller places, more clubs and that sort of thing. But to me that seemed like history repeating itself, because I had been through that with the Nice. We broadened and expanded, and we reached the ultimate doing *The Five Bridges Suite*. But it left the other members of the band behind. They didn't feel completely involved. This is more or less what happened with ELP. They felt it was more my thing than theirs, but they went along with it because that was the only way we could stay together. I think the ELP orchestral tour worked better than it did with the Nice, because we had the technology — pickups in the violin section, so it sounded like a Mellotron [laughs]. There were a lot of problems getting the live album done. The 24-track broke down, and a lot of those mixes were done from two-track masters combined with the soundtrack from the video tape. It was a complicated process, but I got the best sound from it

that I possibly could. It wasn't exactly state-of-the-art recording, but nevertheless I thought it was important and that people needed to hear it. I don't think it's that much of an embarrassment. I do think it's a definite improvement over *The Five Bridges Suite*.

Greg's bass playing was always very sparse. Did that ever bother you, or was it something that you consciously wanted?

No, he had all the freedom in the world to expand on whatever rough framework I gave him, but there were many times when he took the framework literally. He hated improvising. He felt awkward about it. He wanted to know exactly where he stood and what he had to do. Going any further than that worried him. There were a few occasions when he broadened out, but Greg always regarded himself as a singer — although lately he's really excelled in guitar playing, concentrating a lot more on lead guitar lines. He never really worked at it before. But he did a very good job. I'm not putting any member of ELP down. I still think Greg has a very good voice. It's just a question of finding the right context for him to use it in. Sometimes he got overly serious about the quality of his voice, and sometimes I persuaded him to sing things that didn't exactly suit his style.

Could you give an example of that?

Sometimes we'd work at a piece of music, lay the whole thing down in the studio, maybe even put on a few overdubs, and then when vocal time came around, Greg would suddenly discover that it was too high for him. We'd have to go back and record the

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whole thing a tone lower or something — a total waste of all that studio time. We did that once before we went on the road. I had to transpose the whole of *Karnevil 9* down — you can tell if you listen to the difference between the live version and the one that was done in the studio. What can I say? We were two Scorpius working on, at, or with each other all the time, regarding each other from a distance, each one playing it very cautiously. Carl was always full of fun and games, and still is. He's great fun.

Was "The Three Fates" an adaptation of something, or was it totally original?

Totally original. Does it remind you of anything?

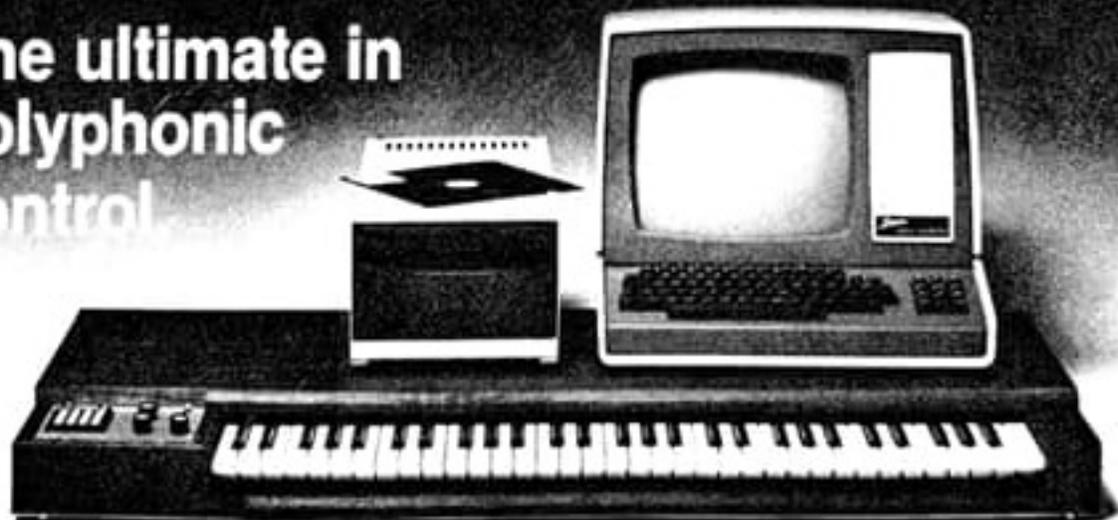
No, but so much of ELP's material involved quotes from other sources, and there were no credits for the Janáček or Bartók pieces on the same album. . . .

In the early days, I thought that "Knife Edge" was far enough removed from Janáček's *Sinfonietta* and "The Barbarian" from Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro* not to worry about crediting it. But I don't like to be thought of as stealing anything, and it gave me a guilty conscience not to have credited them. If the musician is alive, I always make a point of writing them personally or making sure that the record company contacts them and gets the royalty thing straight. Even though you still see no credits on that first ELP album, Janáček's and Bartók's heirs get their royalties. And ever since, we've made sure to list the credits properly. Those mistakes happened in the early days of ELP. I've gotten past making those same mistakes again. ■



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