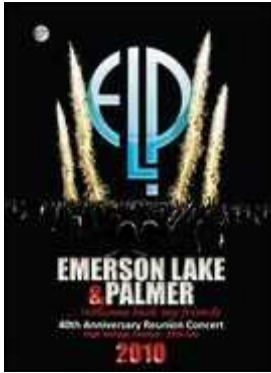




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Emerson, Lake And Palmer: 40th Anniversary Reunion Concert

[MVD Visual](#) // 2010 // 92 Minutes // Not Rated
Reviewed by Judge Victor Valdivia // October 1st, 2011

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Editor's Note

Our reviews of [Emerson, Lake And Palmer: Live At Montreaux 1997 \(Blu-Ray\)](#) (published July 19th, [Emerson, Lake And Palmer: Pictures At An Exhibition](#) (published October 5th, 2001), and [Emerson, Lake And Palmer: Pictures At An Exhibition: Special Edition](#) (published July 27th, 2010) are also available.

The Charge

Welcome back, my friends...

Emerson, Lake & Palmer has received many criticisms over the years, and most of them are eagerly justified. Bombastic, overblown, aggressive, and self-indulgent—not only would the members of ELP agree with all of them, they would wear them as badges of honor. One criticism that has never really sat right, however, is "boring." ELP does many things, but it's hard to imagine sitting through the infamously ostentatious live act—complete with loud solos, explosive pyrotechnics, and Keith Emerson throwing knives into his synthesizer and then bashing it to falling asleep.

Nonetheless, that's exactly what this DVD may lead to. This is a sad and disappointing performance for such a dynamic live act. Keyboardist Keith Emerson, singer/bassist Greg Lake, and drummer Carl Palmer make no attempt to be strictly a performance for nostalgia's sake; ELP hasn't released an album of new material since 1993 and they've been acrimoniously in 1998. Moreover, the musicians don't deny the effect that aging has on their ability to perform their demanding style of music. Even with those caveats, however, it's hard for even the most devout ELP fan to watch without wondering why on Earth the trio agreed to release it. This really should have been left in the vaults.

Emerson, Lake And Palmer: 40th Anniversary Reunion Concert was recorded July 25, 2010, at London's Vantage Rock Festival. Here is the set list:

- "Karn Evil-First Impression Part 2"
- "The Barbarian"
- "Bitches Crystal"
- "Knife-Edge"
- "From the Beginning"
- "Touch and Go"
- "Take A Pebble/Piano Solo/Tarkus"
- "Farewell To Arms"
- "Lucky Man"
- "Pictures at an Exhibition"
- "Fanfare for the Common Man/Drum Solo/Rondo"

The concert opens with a lackluster version of one of ELP's most vibrant songs—most non-fans will recognize "Welcome Back My Friends"—and doesn't get any better from there. The band members are lethargic, struggling to put some energy into the music. No matter how hard they try, however, they are simply unable to generate much. These are old songs (the newest one here dates back to 1992), and these men understand that they're only here one night to help the audience relive past glories. Still, there's nothing sadder than watching three portly, aging men attempt to recapture their glory days purely for money, since there was no attempt whatsoever to actually try to reform an actual working band again (and, seriously, Carl Palmer should *never, ever* take his shirt off in public under any circumstances). There are a few flashes of the old power, mostly during the lengthy "Tarkus" sequence, but they're just dull and depressing. All the fireworks and fancy lights can't hide just how perfunctory this performance is compared to the cry from ELP at its flamboyant best.

Technically, the disc isn't much of a home run. The anamorphic widescreen transfer is decent enough, showing the band crisply (which, at times, is actually a disadvantage). The 5.1 surround mix, however, is thin and soft. The speakers are barely used and only for crowd noise; the music comes entirely from the left and right speakers. The only featurette (28:15) that contains interviews with the band members where they confirm that the show is purely a money move for money (and does it ever show). The disc also comes with a twelve-page booklet full of pictures and information about the band.

Even with the fancy packaging, this is still not a good purchase. While fans may have at least gotten to see the band members onstage playing their hits one last time, the performance itself is so pedestrian that it should have

unrecorded. If you really want to get an idea of just what a deliriously over-the-top live act ELP was at their down the two-disc DVD collection **Beyond the Beginning**, which compiles several archival performances fr '70s prime and also has a warts-and-all biography that will make you appreciate and respect the band's amb misguided. This performance, on the other hand, will simply confirm all the worst stereotypes of prog-rock a dinosaur rock bands all in one swoop. ELP and their fans deserve better than this.

The Verdict

Guilty of being dull and forgettable.

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Did we give **Emerson, Lake And Palmer: 40th Anniversary Reunion Concert** a fair trial? [yes](#) / [no](#)

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