



Decade: 10th Anniversary

[Carl Palmer](#)

MVD Visual - MVD6204D (DVD)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
by **Mark S. Tucker**
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Hmmmmm.....how do I start this review? Ah, I have it: in the pages of FAME was where, after reviewing MVD's issuance of Emerson, Lake, and Palmer's **40th Anniversary Reunion Concert** ([here](#)), I predicted ELP would break up for good. The writing was on the wall in the disc's performance alone. That was Sept. 26, 2011. Three days later, Carl Palmer announced that very fact...and it wasn't me who caught that announcement but FAME's editor, Big Dave Pyles. Whether or not the decision had been made earlier and Palmer was just then letting everyone know; whether or not he'd just taken the occasion of that Sept. 29, 2011, interview to break the news slyly to bandmates; or whether or not the highly influential FAME and Mark S. Tucker, a forum and a critic read and contemplated even by God himself, is up for debate, but it happened and Dave and I were, as far as I can tell, the first two to publish it.

Carl Palmer, however, in between ELP reunions (and such things are BIG business nowadays, just ask The Who), had formed the Carl Palmer Band and run with a showcase of ELP materials for the fans. **Decade: The 10th Anniversary Tour** is the commemoration of just that...but it ain't, I'm telling you now, ELP. Fortunately, it isn't Heavy The World either (a really mediocre but dauntless amateur band that architected much of its metal/neo prog off ELP and whose Spinal Tap-ish dedication to its work is a matter of grinning admiration just by virtue of its never-say-die attitude and crazy-ass energy). I don't need to tell any of the fen or cognoscenti that it's literally impossible to replace Keith Emerson, one of the top keyboardists rock has ever produced (along with Rick Wakeman, Pat Moraz, Kerry Minnear, Tony Banks, Mike Pinder, and various others). Palmer wasn't even going to try, instead recruiting a guitarist alongside the always needed bass player.

I also needn't stress how flaccid, how detumescent, how limp, how candy-assed, how in need of Olympian doses of Viagra ELP's output had gotten, starting with the execrable **Love Beach**, a horrifically failed attempt to bust into mainstream chart territory. Nor need I chronicle how the band never really regained its footing after that period, come what may. Emerson was still pretty bravura but slowing down a touch, tired, Lake was—well, the less said, the better—but Palmer, as this DVD clearly shows, has never lost a molecule of that amazing talent he's shown since the 60s in Atomic Rooster, Crazy World of Arthur Brown, ELP, Asia, Qango, and now here. He's as fine a drummer at 64 as he was in his twenties, maybe even better; like Emerson, one of the very best musicians the rock genre has ever yielded...and, heh!, he had shown it even in ELP's **40th Anniversary** DVD, outshining his mates considerably.

Except for *Karelia Suite* (from Emerson's earlier group, The Nice) and *The 'J' Section* (no clue where that's from), every cut in **Decade** is an ELP tune—no Asia, no Rooster, no Brown—and the whole shebang runs 10 minutes short of two hours, so there's plenty to take in, but, again, you can't replace Emerson, and if Keith can't be re-fashioned, then the material is going to suffer to one degree or another. Ya can't blame guitarist Paul Bielutowicz for that, but, on the other hand, Palmer coulda picked Vitali Kuprij, a phenomenal keyboardist, or a guitarist like Greg Howe, maybe someone on a Jason Becker level, perhaps David Chastain, or a gent of such caliber. It wouldn't have to be a Satriani or Vai (but, man, think of what THAT would have brought!), there are plenty others, but Bielutowicz isn't **quite** what might be expected, though the fans are very happy, and he gathers up his acumen as the DVD progresses.

There are many virtues here, not the least of which is the opportunity to hear a decidedly more metallic / hard rock version of ELP. Also, bassist Simon Fitzpatrick is interesting, wielding a six-stringer, tossing in some lead lines a la Colin Hodgkinson (Back Door, a 70s band) when not laying down a firm and wide set of colorations. Once the fourth track, *Bitches Crystal* is reached, everyone's warmed up and in fiery disposition, *Abaddon's Bolero* and *Tarkus* following soon after. Palmer, however, is on the dime from the moment the concert starts. Small wonder: among his top inspirations were Buddy Rich and Elvin Jones, gentz whose memory demands the absolute best from acolytes. I don't know why the *William Tell Overture* isn't credited, but the version will remind many of PFM's old penchant for reviving the chestnut (and they and Walter/Wendy Carlos loved to speed it up to breakneck speed). One way or another, prog is as prog does.

Track List:

- Welcome Back, My Friends (Karn Evil 9 - 2nd Impression)
- Barbarian
- Hoedown
- Bitches Crystal
- Abadon's Bolero
- Tarkus
- The 'J' Section
- Karelia Suite
- Pictures at an Exhibition
- Fanfare for the Common Man
- Trilogy
- Nutrocker

No credits given, and I'm too damn tired to chase them down; just watching Palmer go to it can be exhausting...delightful but exhausting.

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