Just under three years have already passed since the previous album Sings Greg Lake and this new tribute to the legendary bassist of ELP and others. From the previous one, I had slightly regretted the choice of tracks, namely only the most well-known ones, a thing corrected here with nine titles picked from some of his many solo albums but also from ELP and King Crimson.

From the former line-up, only Pier Gonella (Vanexa) remains, who will delight us on his guitars and bass. The pianist and keyboardist is none other than the great Luca Scherani, well known to prog fans as he is found in La Coscienza di Zeno, Samourai of Prog, and many others... The new drummer is the Milanese Dario Canepa from the jazz and funk world, and added are Gino Ape (Enten Hitti) on the xylophone and Giulia Ermirio on the viol.

The previous album was already a success, but also for this one, Paola especially did not want to betray neither Greg nor his spirit and in this, she once again received the help of his widow, Regina who not only co-produced the album but helped her to lay down her voice and especially her intonations as Greg had done, even telling her when and how these pieces were born so as to imbue herself even better and more deeply with the soul of these pieces.

Nine tracks for almost 37 minutes are on the menu, and the antipasti is with “It Hurts” from the first solo album in 1981 where, among others, Gary Moore, Steve Lukather, Jeff Porcaro, Michael Giles, etc., appeared. It goes without saying that the versions presented here are not there to compete with the originals, you just have to see who appeared on the first versions to realize that the work would have been colossal if that had been the chosen option. Thus, the changes inherent in this kind of covers are either homeopathic or more or less radical, the intention being to best render the spirit and soul of the pieces. “It Hurts” is quite faithful, the following “Watching Over You” from Works Volume II of ELP is richer in arrangements here even if the harmonica from the 1977 version is replaced by the viol. There are more details, sounds, it has more depth, Paola's voice bringing a darker, more ominous side to this love song.

From “Stone of Years” from Tarkus in 1971, psychedelic and Moody Blues at the same time, our Italian friends made a very jazzy version without really denaturing it.

“Lend Your Love to Me Tonight” (Works Volume 1, 77) is a superb song filled with sparkling symphonism, the archetype of successful songwriting; when I saw this cover on the program, I was skeptical, daring to tackle this piece, it was bold! They did it not by purifying but by simplifying, getting rid of orchestration artifices, favoring reason and respect rather than playing the show-offs; thus, it allows us to refocus on the main thing, the melody of the heart of the piece and it's interesting to find this song almost naked.

Also from Tarkus, “The Only Way” owes a lot here to the science of Luca Scherani who, with his talent, managed to tame and make his own the very numerous lines of Keith Emerson; another version that is worth the original!

From 1992 and from the album Black Moon which marked the re-formation of ELP, “Affairs of the Heart”, co-written by Lake and Geoff Downes, keeps here its acoustic guitar frame and the symphonic side it sometimes had has been replaced by intelligent keyboard phrases. This apparently simple title is very difficult to sing for a non-English speaker and it's perhaps on this title that Paola struggles a bit because there are many changes of intonations and rhythms very difficult to respect.

From the first album of King Crimson, In the Court of... in 1969, “I Talk to the Wind” comes out winning from the comparison. Indeed, here, we escape the totally depressive and depressing first two-thirds of the original version that just made you want to shoot yourself! Always in low tempo but with positive sounds of guitars and keyboards, I reconcile with this song thanks to this version.

The very short “All I Want Is You” from Love Beach by ELP in 1978 then, which is, again, superior to the original in my opinion. Very easy, seeking the radio at the time, a kind of “I Can’t Dance” for Genesis later, this title is vastly enriched by everything by our Italians, even finally giving it a real musical value. It concludes with "The Great Gate of Kiev" from ELP's first live in 1971, Pictures at an Exhibition, which was entirely devoted to Mussorgsky except for the last title which is by Tchaikovsky. Faithful in the spirit of the act of rewriting and of the Russian composer and ELP, this version is just as delightful and again, one can feel the touch of Luca Scherani who does a great job there.

In the end, a very successful record that sees talented musicians re-appropriating an entire universe with ease and talent, and a Paola who, once again, is fearless and achieves almost flawlessly, never forcing with her chest voice and who, as on the previous album, sings with humility from her whole heart and as a result, it works!!

Bruno Cassan