"For the Love of Greg Lake" is the esteemed work of singer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Paola Tagliaferro, released on February 14th by Manticore Records. An album made in honour of the great Greg Lake. A versatile musician with an exquisite voice, Paola Tagliaferro has a considerable background deeply rooted in the prog genre. Active since the early '80s, she has collaborated with internationally renowned figures such as Peter Sinfield, Bernardo Lanzetti, and Lino Capra Vaccina. With this album, she reaches her sixth solo record, preceded among others by a first homage to Lake dated 2021 with the work “Paola Tagliaferro sings Greg Lake”.

However, this achievement by Paola Tagliaferro is her first production as an artist of Manticore Records, the historic label founded by Emerson, Lake & Palmer, which Greg's wife, Regina, has been directing since the autumn of 2021, and which in fact co-produced Paola’s work. For this new album, Paola's very peculiar timbre, ranging from mezzo-soprano to light contralto, is accompanied by the extraordinary Compagnia Dell’Es.

Allow me a brief digression: in December 2012, I had the opportunity to meet Greg Lake after attending his concert in Florence. The artist, along with his wife, spent a few minutes with fans for autographs, and I was able to personally witness their kindness and generosity. It is also thanks to this sensitivity that this project dedicated to Greg (who passed away prematurely in 2016) took shape. Regina Lake indeed supported her friend Paola Tagliaferro in this journey, sharing the essence of Greg's ingenious creativity and thereby helping her in the interpretation of the songs.

“For The Love Of Greg Lake” is not, therefore, a mere cover album. It is a total immersion into the musical universe of the artist, not only reprising but also respectfully reworking it with a new guise that remains a fertile ground for that legendary lyricism. It spans the entire repertoire of the prolific production of the bassist, mainly fishing from the works of Emerson, Lake & Palmer, but opening with a gem from Greg Lake's first solo album: “It Hurts”, a poignant song about unrequited love that concludes with an amazing electric guitar solo by Pier Gonella who also contributed to the recording and mixing of the work.

The journey through the EL&P galaxy follows an almost instinctive order, unfolding from the dreamlike beauty of “Watching Over You” through the funky/jazz instrumental cadences of “Stone of Years”. From their second album “Tarkus” comes “The Only Way” re-proposed in the classic trio for bass, drums, and keyboards/piano with Emerson’s part impeccably rendered by Luca Scherani, a perfect blend with the voice of Paola Tagliaferro. In the development of the pieces, which as in this last case re-propose the EL&P formation, there is also room for instrumental reinterpretations entrusted to Giulia Ermirio’s viola and Gino Ape’s xylophone.

“I Talk To The Wind” suddenly takes us into the repertoire of King Crimson, of which Lake was a part between 1969 and 1970, just before founding the legendary trio with Emerson and Palmer. The song enhances Tagliaferro's vocal qualities, charged with poetry with the synth magically recreating the original sounds of the flute. There is also space for a track from an album that was, in my opinion unjustly, contested by critics, namely “Love Beach”, dated 1978. Paola Tagliaferro, by masterfully interpreting from this album “All I Want Is You”, suggests that some hypercritical visions of the time regarding this work should perhaps be reconsidered.

And so we arrive at the conclusion: “The Great Gates Of Kiev”, the historic epilogue of “Pictures at an Exhibition”, the rock reinterpretation of the eponymous work by the Russian composer Modest Mussorgsky, could not be missing. Another piece with multiple dynamics, well interpreted by Paola's voice, while the keyboard plays maintain the solemnity of the original version for much of the track; a crescendo almost orchestral leads to the imposing finale, which, with drum inventions and jazzed tones, closes the album in great style.

Paola Tagliaferro's goal was certainly not simple, but with her flair, the artist managed to create a profound experience that musically enriched her already significant background, entering with style and elegance into the sonic world of Greg Lake. This work is not just a precious relic for fans of great Prog, but also strongly resonates with all those who appreciate the sentiment inherent in music made with passion.