

Emerson, Lake and Palmer defy labeling

By Jill O'Brien
Senior Reporter

"Most artists object to being labeled," said Keith Emerson of Emerson, Lake and Palmer, the band scheduled to play tonight at Omaha's Music Hall.

During a phone interview, Emerson said he didn't like the term "classical rock" used to define his playing.

"Duke Ellington didn't refer to his music as jazz.... I think our music has always been very eclectic, and I agree it's been progressive," he said. "We're aware of current trends, but don't always use them. In the late '70s, Emerson, Lake and Palmer was called heavy metal—we've also been called a waste of talent and electricity."

The British band caused quite a stir in the 1970s, toting Emerson's monstrous Hammond L-100 organ on stage and playing music revised from classical compositions.

"Moussorgsky's 'Pictures at an Exhibition' was one of the first pieces we played as a band," he said.

"I went to a concert in London one evening and had no idea what was on the bill. By chance the Moussorgsky piece was being played and I was really impressed. The next day I learned it was a piano piece and I played it to Greg."

They played it at their first gig, Emerson said, and although the song was well-received, the band was wary about including it on an album.

"Greg thought it sounded too much like Nice—my old band."

Later, "Pictures..." was recorded live, then released in England at a reduced price, Emerson said.

"It sold very well and then Atlantic Records wanted to release it...and the rest is history," he said.

History for a decade anyway. Emerson said the band broke up in 1980 "because the music industry was

switching to soft-sell and synthetic bands. The whole grandiose effect of Emerson, Lake and Palmer was looked on as over-the-top," he said. "Well, we always have been...."

So, Emerson, Lake and Palmer branched out to learn different aspects of the music industry and explore individual musical adventures, Emerson said.

Lake did a solo project and joined Asia, a pop-oriented band; Emerson wrote soundtracks for seven films. At one point, Emerson worked as a motorcycle courier for a week.

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—Keith Emerson
Band Member

“It was everything I thought it would be,” he said.

During that exploration era, Emerson, Lake and Powell was formed, then Emerson, Palmer and Berry. But the chemistry of Emerson, Lake and Palmer reunited the original trio in 1992.

Since their 1980 break up, musical views have changed, Emerson said.

"The world has gone full circle and music has become digitized to such an extreme, all the personality has gone out of the music," he said.

Emerson, Lake and Palmer excluded.

Last year, the band released "Black Moon" and more recently "Emerson, Lake & Palmer Live at the Royal



Courtesy of PolyGram Records

From left: Keith Emerson, Greg Lake and Carl Palmer are Emerson, Lake and Palmer. They will play in the Music Hall in Omaha tonight.

Albert Hall."

The "Albert Hall" album includes "Lucky Man" and the classic hit, "Still...You Turn Me On," featuring the melodic guitar and vocals of Lake.

One of their new songs, "Black Moon," reveals a heavier side of Emerson, Lake and Palmer, accentuated by Palmer's dramatic drumming.

Because "Black Moon" was inspired by the burning oil fields during the Gulf War, Emerson was asked if the piece served as an environmental

or political statement for the band.

"Black Moon" was just a musical observance of what's happened," he said. "We're not really in business to make political statements as such."

Included on the "Black Moon" and "Albert Hall" albums is "Romeo and Juliet," a strong instrumental spotlighting Emerson's versatile playing.

"I thought it leant itself very well to our style," he said. "I've always chosen pieces that don't have to be messed with very much. Some ver-

sions by rock artists are out-and-out devastations of a piece. I try to maintain the integrity of the piece and research the score and get the composer's OK, if he's living."

Emerson has spent half his life researching scores for Emerson, Lake and Palmer (and variations). Did he have any idea he would be as involved in music as he is?

"I had no formulated plan," he said. "I just went from day to day as I still do, really."

Nameless character cracks up, but new movie is not a comedy



"Falling Down"



Don't be fooled by the commercials. "Falling Down" (Douglas 3, 1300 P St., Edgewood 3, 56th and Highway 2) is not a comedy. It is a statement about the world today and it is anything but funny.

Michael Douglas plays an ordinary working stiff, someone whose name isn't even given until 90 minutes of the movie have passed.

The name isn't important. It isn't even listed in the credits, and this is the point that director Joel Schumacher ("Flatliners") is trying to make. This guy could be anybody.

This "anybody" finally blows his cool in an LA gridlock and abandons his car so he can walk home for his daughter's birthday party.

Along the way, he defends himself from a mugging and demolishes a corner market with a baseball bat.

"I'm just standing up for my rights as a consumer," Douglas says just before he smashes some overpriced doughnuts.

Meanwhile, police Sergeant Prendergast (Robert Duvall) is preparing for his last day on the job before retirement, brought upon by his nagging wife (Tuesday Weld).

"Falling Down" forces Michael Douglas' character (credited by his license plate number: "D-FENS") through not only the unacceptable problems that are present every day,



David Badders/DN

such as homophobia, anti-Semitism and racial bigotry, but also through situations that have a touch of dark humor applied, like dealing with the perpetually smiling employees at a fast-food restaurant.

The movie is a visual masterpiece, using the powerful, colorful images of Los Angeles graffiti amid muggy weather and thick smog for the perfect contrast—the brightness within the muck and filth.

Both Douglas and Duvall are excellent in their roles, each carrying his own plot line, which have been weaved together by Douglas' quiet rampage through the city.

You won't leave the theater feeling like a happy camper, but you won't be sorry for seeing the movie, either.

Check it out.

—Gerry Beltz

'The Crying Game' lives up to the hype with powerful story



"The Crying Game"



Often when a motion picture is highly acclaimed and hotly anticipated, it falls short and disappoints the general movie-going public.

That is not the case with "The Crying Game," (Plaza 4, 12th and P streets) a stylish, taut and often times humorous thriller from writer/director Neil Jordan.

In a nutshell: Fergus (Stephen Rea), a soldier in the Irish Republican Army, flees Ireland and takes refuge in London after a botched abduction leaves the IRA's terrorist base in flames.

Once there, his heavy-handed conscience insists he seek out the victim's girlfriend, Dil (Jaye Davidson). Their subsequent relationship is the heart of the story.

To say anything more would unravel the carefully crafted story, spoil the surprise and suspense of the film and the wonder of watching it unfold on screen.

Suffice it to say that "The Crying Game" raises all kinds of questions regarding the nature of iden-

tity and the essence of love.

Jordan superbly handles potentially explosive subject matter—there is some pretty powerful stuff happening here. The camera work and the film's score deftly work together to underscore terrific acting and potent, witty dialogue.

Rea's Fergus is an odd duck: a friendly freedom fighter whose kind heart and generous nature put him in some awkward situations. Rea makes Fergus a charming character and his performance is brilliant from the very beginning.

Forest Whitaker gives a strong, albeit short, performance as Jody, the British soldier abducted by the IRA to trade for political prisoners. His unlikely friendship with his captor and guard Fergus is both touching and sad.

Special commendation must go to Jaye Davidson for one of the boldest performances in recent years—Dil is an exciting and fascinating character.

The five Academy Awards nominations it received, including Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actor—and another that threatens to sour the surprise of the film—are easily earned. With a strong script, commendable acting and solid directing, Jordan has created a first-rate film.

"The Crying Game" is a film definitely worth all its hype.

—Anne Steyer