



November 2022

Hey one and all!

Hope everyone had a great Halloween. Thanksgiving is coming up faster than I could've believed possible (wasn't it just Spring with Summer approaching??). This month's Enewsletter will be a little longer, but will be well worth it, I promise! First let's start with a recap.

This past month, we made a return visit to The Garden State (New Jersey, for any members outside of the US). Anyone not in or from the northeast might find this interesting/amusing - Debonair Music Hall in Teaneck, NJ is very close to New York. The venue is 5 miles from the George Washington Bridge. And if we talk about traveling distance from our home base (the *Manticore*'s Lair is located in Lynbrook, NY on Long Island, near JFK airport) it's a 25 mile drive. With no traffic or RAs (road assholes), it SHOULD be less than a half-hour jaunt. However, that is never EVER the case. It took me 2 1/2 hours to get from home to the venue! After the show, I texted with my good friend Gërgo, in Hungary. That same day, he took a day trip to Vienna. It took him less time to go from Budapest to Vienna than it did for me to get from Lynbrook to Teaneck, NJ! I'm not complaining, I'm just saying.....ok, maybe I'm venting, just a little, but I think it's of interest to non-New Yorkers what we put up with in the tri-state area that isn't really as much of an issue in most other places. But I digress....

We had a really great, well-attended show at the fabulous Debonair Music Hall in October. Local radio celebrity Bob Konig of WFDU 89.1 FM radio introduced us and we were off and running. *Manticore* friend Dan Falcon brought his camcorder and recorded the entire show from his seat. We plan on posting excerpts from the show - quite possibly complete songs - on Facebook and probably YouTube in the near future. Please subscribe to the *Manticore* YouTube channel, if you haven't already, so you can get notifications when we post stuff that might be of interest to you.

This month brings us back up to Hudson Falls, NY, to the historic Strand Theatre. We've been fortunate to play The Strand for several years now. The huge stage, awesome sound system and accommodating staff make this venue a true joy to bring *Manticore* to year after year. Our gracious host, Jonathan Newell, is the power behind the ongoing renovation of this glorious venue. He's been toiling tirelessly for years, working with donations and volunteers to restore the 140 year old theatre to its original

majestic state. We're happy to be invited back to test the stability of the chandeliers and see if we can use a wide variety of audio frequencies to peel the paint off the walls. Jonathan's talents have withstood *Manticores*' efforts, however, but we'll see what effect we can have on the ol' girl this year. ;o)

If you can make it to The Strand this go around, you can take a crack at our new *Manticores Swag*. Tee shirts are available in sizes from med to 3XL and we have introduced new knit beanies with the *Manticores* logo embroidered on them, that will help keep you progaliciously(?) warm this winter.



Now, the highlight of our November Enewsletter is a story from our Greg Lake surrogate, Ron Ponella, about his newest upcoming addition to our *Manticores* family:

"A Scorpion is Born!"

Back in 1977, with the release of their Works Volume 1 double album and its use of a 70 piece orchestra on the recording and subsequent concert tour, ELP had embarked on one of the most ambitious musical sojourns in the history of modern music.

On side 4 of the album, there are two pieces of music; Aaron Copeland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" and an ELP original piece called "Pirates". With both of these masterworks, we are treated to cutting edge performances by the band and an incredible blending of musical perfection with the orchestra.

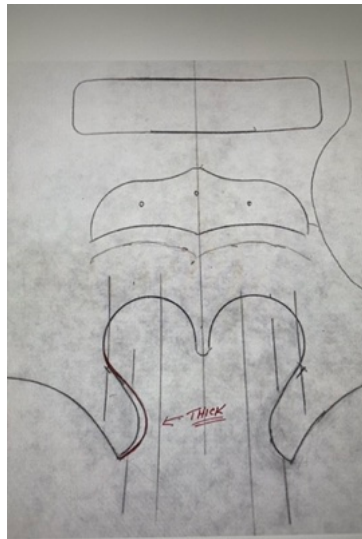
We are also introduced to some amazing new sounds from Keith's Yamaha GX-1 synthesizer and Greg Lake's custom Alembic Scorpion 8-

string bass guitar, which would come to be affectionately called his “Pirate Bass”. The sound of Greg’s Bass on these recordings and in the live performances (which I was lucky enough to have attended during this tour) was absolutely extraordinary.



Alembic, famous for their quality craftsmanship and attention to detail, as well as their unique patented signature electronic circuitry, is a favorite among such notable Bass greats as Stanley Clarke and John Entwistle, as well as Greg Lake.

Always intrigued by Greg’s beautiful Scorpion bass and that signature “Alembic sound” and never being able to capture anything that resembles it or is quite like it, I explored having one custom created for myself. So.....earlier this year, I decided to contact the artisan crafters at Alembic and have my own Scorpion built.



Working with my dealer, Trevor Lindsey (an amazing, talented bass player, touring musician and famous session man, himself), he helped me design the bass to my specific details. Every aspect of the build is considered, including the woods selected and body contours, as well as things like adding an ornate Heart Omega carving at the tail end of the body and choices of headstock design (I chose to go with a style similar to Greg’s).

The current basses that I use on stage are a Music Man StingRay and a Sterling, both are 5-string. So, I designed it as a 5-string. I like playing 5-string basses, I feel that the low B adds a dimension to so many of the ELP songs we play in our shows. I had



the neck specifications matched most closely to my StingRay (with green side LED's).

Greg's Scorpion had some unique neck inlays, which were handmade by co-owner Susan Wickersham herself. She graciously worked with me, designing (2) custom inlays for my neck. A skull and crossbones (an homage to Greg and his Scorpion) and a Manticore (for obvious reasons).



Susan is a super nice lady who loved telling me about her time working with Greg Lake (he had 2 Scorpions built and several other Alembic basses and guitars) and how nice a man he was.. I was so thrilled

to hear about all of it. Alembic takes great pride in their craftsmanship and the entire process, start to finish, takes about a year or more per instrument.

I'm hoping to have it by the time we play our show at Prog on the Ranch in Florida, next year. I'll keep you updated.

Hope to see you all at our upcoming shows!






Peace,


Ron



The **Manticore** calendar is rapidly filling up. We have our dates all set, up to next July, with some new, untested venues being checked out even as we speak. We've had requests to bring **Manticore** to other parts of the nation and even other countries! Lately, I've been fielding requests from places like Texas, South Carolina, Ohio, California, New Hampshire, UK, Brazil and Australia. Sadly, with the limited resources and time available to us (2/3 of the band have businesses to run), we are unable to satisfy many of those requests. We do our best to bring the music of ELP to as many

places as we can that are within an 8 hour driving distance from NYC. If you know of any theaters or cabaret-type places that host tribute shows (and they're in an area that generally has decent turnout for prog shows), feel free to DM us with the name and contact info for the venue and we'll cheerfully explore it. If you happen to have a connection to the venue, even better!

Keep in mind, November is the month that Carl Palmer's Legacy Band is returning to The States! Carl is doing his ELP50 Welcome Back My Friends - The Return of Emerson, Lake & Palmer Tour, at which he'll be playing a good part of his set along with live concert footage of Keith and Greg flanking him on either side, on massive video walls. Not to worry - Paul Bielatowicz and Simon Fitzpatrick will still be there for the non-video parts of the show (I just hope they're salaried and not pro-rated on a "per-song" basis....). At the moment, the only tour dates that have been announced are in November and beginning of December, but I'm guessing that if this venture is successful there could be other dates and places either planned or added. That's not inside info - it's just a guess. I bring all this up because we in  feel that what we do is meant to enhance Carl Palmer's ELP legacy, not replace it or detract from it. We want you to get your ELP fix any and every way you possibly can. As a tie-in to  happenings, here's a quick story: My (Rob's) friend Nigel Hewitson, of the UK, was originally (pre-pandemic) planning on coming to the US for a  show. That idea got close to happening, but never panned out. Now (sort-of-post-pandemic), he's planning on coming to New York with his lovely wife, Tracy, to catch one of Carl's video-enhanced shows at the Patchogue Theater. They will be staying with us in Lynbrook, and since there's no  show scheduled for the scant time they'll be here (they'll get to experience a real American Thanksgiving dinner for the very first time),  will be bringing a show to them by having a run-thru rehearsal here in The Lair

while they're visiting! So the Hewitsons will have their own personal  performance, thus fulfilling all the requirements needed for a perfect, successful vacation - private concert, public concert and huge Thanksgiving dinner that couldn't be beat (thanks, Arlo - yes, we can't have a true Thanksgiving dinner without playing Alice's Restaurant, can we?). Egészségedre!

Also remember, tickets to [Prog on the Ranch 2023](#) are now up for sale on their website. The [Crimson Sky Ranch](#) is much warmer in February than New York (so I'm told) - and we'll be there delivering extra warmth with some of the hottest ELP you've seen in years, along with special guests: Rachel Flowers and Paul Bielatowicz. Other bands headlining will be Awaken (Yes tribute), Great Wide Nothing, Orpheus 9, Local 518 (featuring David Pastorius), Rachel Flowers and Paul Bielatowicz (of Carl Palmer's Legacy Band). ALSO performing that same weekend, will be the [following groups](#): Van Hranicky (Van Halen tribute), Starless (John Wetton tribute), Lambtrot (Genesis tribute), The Very Nice (Nice tribute), Boris & the Spiders (Who tribute), Maynard's Tool (Tool tribute), The Logical Band (Supertramp tribute) and assorted musicians playing their favorite songs on The Grid. It will be a total music weekend that will be well-worth the trip!

That's about it - that's a LOT. And thanks again for caring and hanging with us.

Love and peace,

Rob Shepard and The  Team

www.ManticoreNY.com

@ManticoreNY

A Anticore

the tribute to Emerson Lake & Palmer