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ELP now means music — Emerson Lake and Powell

Emerson, Lake and Palmer, from 1969 to 1979, were known as ELP. In 1986, with keyboardist Keith Emerson and guitarist-singer Greg Lake teamed with drummer Cozy Powell, it's once again ELP.

They fought it for awhile, Emerson says during an interview he shares with Powell. "We viewed the initials with a certain amount of hilarity. At first we didn't want to use our initials. People were calling us the initials anyway. We thought, they are our names. You work hard in the music business to build up a reputation. It seems stupid to knock it down."

They certainly didn't look for a drummer whose last name started with P, Emerson asserts. "If Cozy's name had been Smith he would still have been in the band."

Powell got the nickname Cozy, from jazz drummer Cozy Cole, when he was 11 or 12. "Nicknames were the vogue. I was at a school with guys 17 or 18, at that age into jazz. We listened to Louis Bellson, Buddy Rich and Cozy Cole."

"Emerson, Lake and Powell," the first album by the new lineup, is on Polydor Records. It was No. 28 on the best-selling chart for three weeks in July and No. 33 the following two weeks. But a big U.S. tour, starting in mid-August in El Paso was sure to send sales upward again.

Powell was in the Jeff Beck Group for three years in the early 1970s, then in Bedlam, Rainbow, MSG and Whitesnake. He has been on nearly 25 tours in America.

He says, "I had been at the Rio de Janeiro Festival with Whitesnake in January 1985, the last concert I did with them. In February, Keith and I spoke. He wanted me to come down and do some work on an album. Keith's idea was to have a second keyboard and more guitarists and make it a much bigger band. We started playing and realized what we really wanted was a three-piece band." All three live outside London.

Drummer Carl Palmer is still with Asia. "We didn't call him," Emerson says. "I didn't intend to reform what we were doing in the '70s. Particularly seeing the writers remaining the same, it was important to have something a bit different in the band."

Emerson, Lake and Palmer succumbed to tour burnout and the rise of disco and punk, though Emerson says record sales were still high. He says, "I think if we had continued longer, we'd probably have disgraced ourselves. We needed a breather and to let technology catch up with what I had to do."

Lake made solo albums. Emerson, who wanted to compose and orchestrate for large forces, says, "It was a great experience working with different people every day. It's impor-

tant, I think, from time to time to play with other people." Emerson composed film scores but he got his fill. "I lost heart, came disheartening when work so long on a piece of music it would be lost in the end of the film."

"So I thought it was time to be heard again. I played around with various people and Greg and I got into each other. He offered some lyrics for some material. That caught the attention of Gram Records and Jim Lesch pushed us toward doing a new album together. I was heading away."

Emerson, Lake and Powell played classically inspired music. Their first video, years before was of Copland's "Fanfare for Common Man."

Emerson says, "I don't see writing is classical. It is symphonic, its makeup, much the same as before." Modern technology makes it easier to get a full sound now, Emerson says, for instance, the bass can trigger a synthesizer to play a trumpet line. "We're using tapes," Emerson says, "when we play it. You still play in the first place. Cozy's triggering device. He hits something that triggers a certain sound that has a particular sound."

Powell says, "Backing track is not cricket as far as we're concerned. A lot of bands get away with it. We like to use the latest technology to enhance the music. Keith has some outrageous sounds on his boards, I can assure you."

Emerson, who programs and operates his computer, says, "It's a great expense. We did it as we could before it almost bankrupted us."

"We don't rule out playing with an orchestra in the future as long as somebody else foots the bill, done our bit to support live music. The new album includes 10 minutes of 'Mars the Bringer of War' by Holst's 'The Planets.'"

Emerson, Lake and Powell's "Mars" without tapes. Emerson incorporated music in the album featuring Powell.

The drummer says, "Most of the solos are extremely boring and far too long. You can't possibly get people's attention. Mine use special effects and lots of different sounds, not always drums, but they're short."

Originally, Emerson didn't want them to tour. "I got the band up in 1979. We worked ourselves to death. At first I thought 'We'll make an album and let it go.' It became obvious it was a criminal just to play in a rehearsal studio. There was an audience there that actually wanted to see

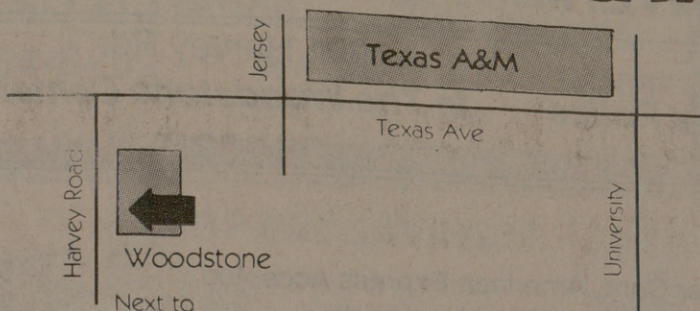
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