

Journal Log #20

Can We Know the Past?



<http://www.echs.k12.sd.us/Adv%20Pages/Dustin/MY%20PAGE/Led-Zepplin.jpg>

After watching and listening to the film clip from “Led Zeppelin: The Song Remains the Same” and reading David Montgomery “Heavy, Wheaton; A Faithful Few Insist They Saw Led Zeppelin Play a Local Gig in 1969, but the Details Are Hazy” (The Washington Post, March 9, 2009, C1), complete the following.

1. Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones and the late John Bonham made up the rock band Led Zeppelin. In 1973 when they played at Madison Square Garden (the film), they were one of the biggest draws in rock. But like all such acts, their origins were humble; they played at small venues as they honed their skills. The main question for you is whether Led Zeppelin played the Wheaton (suburban Maryland) Youth Center on January 20, 1969. What do you think?
2. Whether you believe that Zeppelin played Wheaton or not, review the evidence in the David Montgomery article and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the author’s points.

Discussion Ideas and Teacher Notes

Yes Evidence

- memory of Anne Marie Pemberton (age 17 in 1969, now a computer systems engineer); she claims that Jimmy Page played “a Fender Telecaster with a psychedelic paint job” that was portrayed in a photograph brought by Zeppelin collector Brian Knapp of Alexandria, Virginia
- memory of Tom McAleer with the sneakers he wore that night (now a liquor salesman who grew up in Wheaton)
- at the reunion sponsored by local filmmaker Jeff Krulik, 100 people showed up, more than the 50 or 60 (crowd estimate for the January 20, 1969 gig); about “a half-dozen” at the reunion claimed that they were present; the remaining attendees were fans who had seen other shows at the center and local musicians who had performed at the center
- memory of Tom Grooms (now a public affairs director and DJ with WJZW)
- memory of Marc Elrich (now a Montgomery County Council member, then a guitarist and singer in the band Franklin Park Zoo)
- official website of the band ledzeppelin.com lists the Wheaton concert in the chronology of the band’s gigs (source for the information was Capitol Rock, an encyclopedic record of the DC music scene compiled by Mark Opsasnick who was told the story of the Zeppelin gig by Barry Richards who as a young DJ and promoter brought many acts to Wheaton)
- in phone interview from Los Angeles, Barry Richards said Zeppelin played Wheaton; it was a last minute gig to fill in an open night between dates in Detroit and Pittsburgh (so last minute there was little time to promote the show); Richard’s remembers that Zeppelin manager Peter Grant (he died in 1995) was angry at the poor turnout and he thought that Grant would beat him up; Richards says that he gave Grant \$100 for gas money

No Evidence

- no tickets stubs of the concert
- no posters advertising the event
- no pictures of the event
- no news clippings of the gig
- memory of Sharon Ward Ellis who remembers Iggy Pop performing but not Zeppelin (former director of the youth center)
- nothing in scrapbook of Ruth Lynn Youngwirth that documents youth center concerts from 1967 to 1972
- according to Zeppelin webmaster Sam Rapalloformer, touring manager of Zeppelin Richard Cole does not remember the show

Additional Information

- Led Zeppelin were an English rock band formed in 1968 by Jimmy Page (guitar, born 1944), Robert Plant (vocals, born 1948), John Paul Jones (bass guitar, keyboards) and John Bonham (drums). With their heavy, guitar-driven sound, Led Zeppelin are regarded as one of the first heavy metal bands. However, the band's individualistic style draws from many sources and transcends any one genre. Their rock-infused interpretation of the blues and folk genres also incorporated rockabilly, reggae, soul, funk, classical, Celtic, Indian, Arabic, pop, Latin and country. Close to 30 years after disbanding following Bonham's death in 1980, the band continues to be held in high regard for their artistic achievements, commercial success and broad influence. The band has sold more than 300 million albums worldwide. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Led_Zeppelin)
- Zeppelin was on its first US tour in late January of 1969; the only recognized band member was Jimmy Page who had played with the Yardbirds
- when Zeppelin played Merriweather Post Pavilion in May 1969, a ticket cost \$5.75; a show at Wheaton teen center cost a dollar or two
- Zeppelin played the Laurel (Maryland) Pop Festival in July 1969 (find Carl Bernstein review of the concert)
- surviving band members did not respond to inquiries

What is the quality of the evidence presented?

KNOWLEDGE ISSUE – IMPORTANCE of EVIDENCE / EVIDENCE can be AMBIGUOUS

- What is best evidence? Weakest evidence?
- Assessing certain historical evidence involves a range from too little evidence to too much evidence. Another problem is conflicting evidence? In this situation, which applies here?

ANOTHER KNOWLEDGE ISSUE – IMPORTANCE of PRIMARY SOURCES as the “BEDROCK of HISTORY” A primary source is a source that is written by someone who was there at the time.

- For this January 20, 1969 gig, do we have primary sources?
- Can memories of eye-witnesses serve as valid primary sources? How fallible are eye-witness memories? Remember that an individual’s perceptions are shaped by interests, expectations, and cultural background. Assess the memory of each eye-witness.

Can historians rely on people’s memories?

KNOWLEDGE ISSUE – MEMORY as HISTORICAL EVIDENCE / MEMORY CAN BE FALLIBLE

- In general, how good is your memory? Do some individuals have better memories than others?
- How reliable is your memory as a guide to important past events in your life?
- How old is the memory?
- Do you keep a journal / diary that might enhance the record of your life? If yes, what determines what you chose to include and what you chose to omit? If yes, why did you maintain your journal? How reliable were your entries?

Is this a significant event worth investigating further?

KNOWLEDGE ISSUE – JUDGING SIGNIFICANCE

- How do we decide whether or not an event is significant?
- Regarding this gig, many would agree that a January 1969 Zeppelin gig is not significant? Yet recent trends in history complicate this assessment. Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, historians began pursuing more research in social and cultural trends and focusing on local contexts. If you are a local historian of suburban Wheaton who is interested in cultural trends then the concert’s significance takes on greater value and might merit further study.

What research avenues would an historian pursue to probe this episode further?

- How many people traveled with the band in its first US tour? Try interviewing those still alive. But remember this show was just a small performance that occurred 40 years ago. Did anyone in the band and its associates keep written records from January 1969?
- On this early 1969 tour, how did the band travel? Plane? Bus? Van?
- Track down other people who attended(?). Interview them. Did anyone keep a journal / diary covering January 1969? Has it survived? Does anyone have photographs taken at the Wheaton Youth Center on January 20, 1969?
- Was Wheaton, Maryland served by a local newspaper? Do any local archives hold issues from January 1969?
- The Wheaton Youth Center was a part of the local government. Are there archives of this local jurisdiction that survived? If so, have any records of the Youth Center survived?

FINALLY In this small story in the history of rock music, can we know the past?

From Richard van de Lagemaat Theory of Knowledge (Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 302

We can know the past only to the extent that we have evidence for it. **HISTORY is the PRESENT TRACES of the PAST.**

January 20, 1969 Wheaton, MD US, [Wheaton Youth Center](#)

Setlist:

Songs performed during this period include: Train Kept a Rollin', I Can't Quit You Baby, Dazed and Confused, As Long As I Have You, Killing Floor, White Summer / Black Mountain Side, Babe I'm Gonna Leave You, You Shook Me, How Many More Times, Communication Breakdown, Pat's Delight (drum solo).

Notes:

This date is officially unconfirmed and no proof has yet surfaced.

Press: Lore has it that only 55 people showed up for the Wheaton Youth Center show, quite possibly the smallest audience to see Led Zeppelin outside of Jimmy Page's living room. Local filmmaker Jeff Krulik is confident it actually took place, having made contact with the man who organized the concert: Barry Richards, who at the time was a DJ on Gaithersburg radio station WHMC and now lives on the West Coast. "It's unbelievable," said Jeff. "And the fact that it was a Monday night, January 20th, the night of Richard Nixon's inauguration."

"There's people who grew up in Wheaton, across the street, who went to every show, who don't remember it". Jeff, who with John Heyn made the cult classic "Heavy Metal Parking Lot" (the documentary consists of fans outside the Capital Centre before a 1986 Judas Priest concert), has become obsessed with Zep's first concert in the Washington area. It's an outgrowth of a project on the area teen center scene in the late '60s and early '70s.

Memorabilia:

No memorabilia for this show yet. But check back soon!

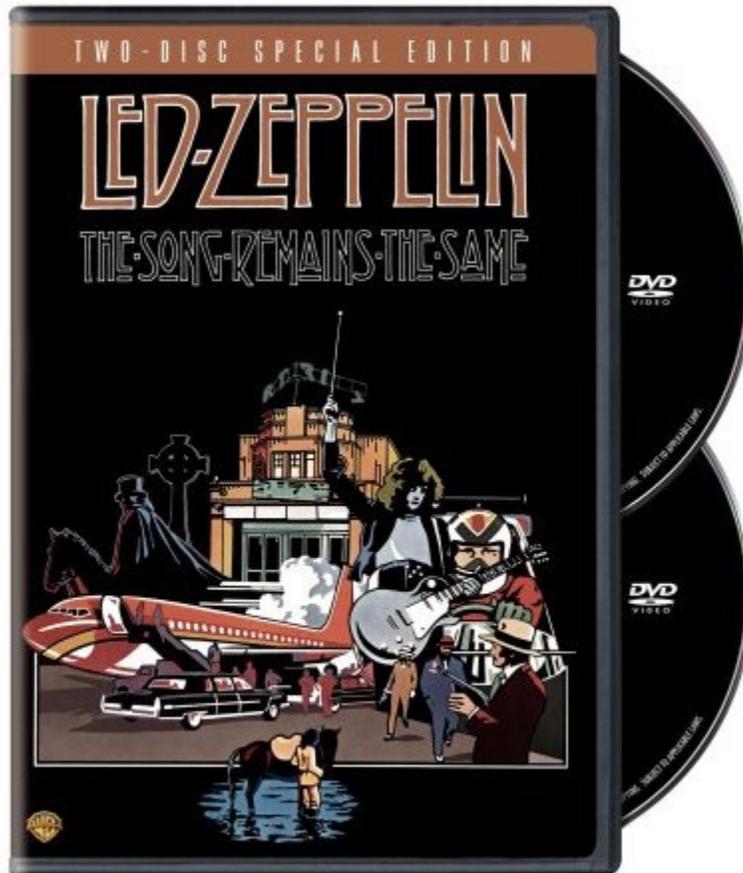
<http://ledzeppelin.com/show/january-20-1969>



1969 Live

Led Zeppelin - The Song Remains the Same (2 Disc Special Edition) (2007)

Starring: [Led Zeppelin](#) Rating: **PG**



Format: AC-3, Closed-captioned, Color, Dolby, DVD-Video, Original recording remastered, Subtitled, Widescreen, NTSC

Language: English **Subtitles:** English, French, Spanish **Region:** Region 1 **Aspect Ratio:** 1.66:1

Number of discs: 2 **Studio:** Warner Home Video **DVD Release Date:** February 26, 2008

Run Time: 138 minutes **ASIN:** B0013K1ALE

The line forms here for the world's greatest and possibly most influential band – Led Zeppelin! With Dazed and Confused, Stairway to Heaven, Whole Lotta Love and more signature performances, this mesmerizing movie built around Zep's famed '73 NYC concerts is convincing proof why. Band members supervised the Re-mastering and Dolby 5.1 Re-mixing of the film's image and sound. In addition to their performances, fantasy sequences and at-home glimpses of Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones and the late John Bonham, this 2-disc Special Edition has over 40 minutes of newly-added extra features including: Two (2) never-before-released songs in rare performance footage: Celebration and Over the Hills and Far Away; Vintage TV Footage: Drake Hotel Robbery during the New York Concert Stand; Robert Plant BBC Interview and Tampa Concert Band Arrival. Also available in Hi-Def and Blu Ray!

5.0 out of 5 stars **Song Remains The Same Review**, November 17, 2008

By [Robert T. Lukowski "MilwMusicMan"](#) (Milwaukee, WI, USA)

Whether you're a Led-Head like me or just a casual Zeppelin fan, this is mandatory viewing material. It's undoubtedly one of the finest guitar performances ever caught on film. Ever. The things Jimmy pulls off are amazing. With this DVD you get to see Led Zeppelin all at the height of their creativity, talent and ability. I was a little surprised when I first realized that the newly included songs that were left off the original motion picture were placed on a separate disk and not inserted into their respective places in the concert film. But then I read that due to legal reasons, they weren't allowed to alter the original format of the film...only remaster the sound and images, but not mess around with the order of songs. So they had to put those other songs from the NY concerts on a separate disk. No biggie, at least you now have them all. The Ocean, Celebration Day and others! Some cool extras that I hadn't seen before.

Some people who don't understand Led Zeppelin have complained that the live versions don't sound like the studio versions. However, Led never tried to reproduce that sound. They played these songs differently every night. Another complaint is that some say Zep live is self-indulgent. It's not. Per Jimmy Page, Led Zeppelin live allows for all four members to take their turn in "steering the ship." In this manner, it's actually very generous to the other members and not selfish. What else can be said that hasn't already been said by thousands (millions?) of other Zep fans. This concert is tremendous and the level of musicianship is awe-inspiring. And why wouldn't you want to see Jimmy at his height, playing his double-neck Gibson plus his famous Les Pauls! If you like rock music, you've got to have it.

4.0 out of 5 stars **Essential purchase for any Zeppelin fan**, November 24, 2008

By [Tonebender](#) (New Jersey, USA)

For the longest time if you were a Zeppelin fan this was your only chance to catch a glimpse of them live, and even then you had to wait to see it at a midnight movie.

OK, I'm showing my age and I know I'm being a little nostalgic. Sure, the fantasy sequences are a little cheesy and even then, we noticed that sometimes Jimmy's hand's weren't syncing up quite right with the music but it didn't matter, this was Zeppelin live! Anyway, they've remastered the soundtrack, the picture looks a lot better and the second disc of extra footage makes it essential. If you're a fan, you either have it already or you need this.

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful:

5.0 out of 5 stars **This will put a bustle in your hedgerow**, January 24, 2009

By [Surferofromantica "S.O.R."](#) (Singapore)

Released in 1976, The Song Remains The Same is footage taken on three nights in Led Zeppelin's 1973 concert at New York's Madison Square Gardens. The band performs "Rock and Roll," "Black Dog," "Since I've Been Loving You," "No Quarter," "The Song Remains The Same," "The Rain Song," "Dazed and Confused," "Stairway to Heaven," "Moby Dick," "Heartbreaker," and "Whole Lotta Love." The film is structured such that it starts off with a fantasy sequences and then shots of the band at home with their families before the tour starts, then there's documentary footage of the band arriving in New York and driving into Manhattan, before the concert begins. The onstage shots are largely of Robert Plant, with some of Jimmy Page, less of John Bonham, and really only one or two of John Paul Jones (who literally wears a heart on his sleeve). Robert Plant is dressed in jeans, shirtless under a dainty vest, John Paul Jones is also pretty in some sort of Victorian garb, Jimmy Page is an alien in a star suit, and John Bonham a lad in white pants and a t-shirt. The onstage footage is okay, but there's probably too much camera attention given to Robert Plant, rock 'n' roll's great Adonis, not nearly enough to Jimmy Page, rock 'n' roll's great Anubis. For some of Page's solos the camera is elsewhere (such as on John Paul Jones during the amazing "Since I've Been Loving You" solo, or on all the other members of the band when the crunchy riff of "Dazed and Confused" kicks in at the beginning of the song), or even when the camera is on Page during a solo the focus is too high and you can't see what he's doing with his hands, very frustrating. During other solos the director cuts to a fantasy sequence or shows documentary footage. Sometimes this works well, such as during the wanky 20-minute "Dazed and Confused" solo, but I'd liked to have watched the "No Quarter" solo.

The fantasy sequence that start the movie is probably the best one, showing John Bonham, manager Peter Grant and tour manager Richard Cole dressed up as gangster hitmen driving an old-timer from one country estate to another, which they proceed to shoot up with machine guns. Whoever their enemies are (one of them, apparently, is Roy Harper) is never explained, the episode is quite surreal. Then it goes to the present day, Peter Grant is on a phone, a message is dispatched, a messenger delivers a letter to Robert Plant on his farm in Bron-Yr-Aur where he's watching his kids playing, the five-year-old Carmen Jane and the two-year-old Karac (who would, tragically, die of a viral infection four years after), John Bonham is plowing the fields with a tractor, John Paul Jones is reading "Jack and the Beanstock" to his daughters Jacinda, Tamara and Kierra, Peter Grant is driving an old-timer with a woman, Richard Cole is driving another old-timer to a pub, and Jimmy Page is playing a hurdy gurdy by the lake (he turns around, his shades glow orange and the world goes psychedelic). John Paul Jones gets the only lines of any of the intro or fantasy sequences, when he reads the letter: "Tour dates!" (goofy grin). "This is Tomorrow!" (look of dismay). Cue Led Zeppelin's jet The Starship landed in New York, limousines, police escort, the pastoral "Bron-Yr-Aur" plays as the limos approach Madison Square Gardens. Doves fly through the air. We are in a dark, crowded space, the band seems to be onstage, we hear the massive drum intro to "Rock 'n' Roll," then the lights come on and it's Led Zeppelin!!!!

But you do see some Jimmy Page, there is even a nice shot that highlights drops of sweat that have fallen on his Les Paul. In many of the shots of Robert Plant, his crotch is in clear view and the shape of his genitals is quite clearly outlined through his tight jeans. Great crowd shots, including scenes of girls in rapt attention, plenty of stoners, even black guys dressed like pimps. Cool theremin bits, including one blast in "No Quarter," and plenty more in "Whole Lotta Love." Too many non-band members in view in some of the shots, so it's not very intimate. Bonzo working the drum, grimacing and gnashing his teeth, flicking his tongue. Snatches of "San Francisco (Be Sure To Wear Flowers In Your Hair)" sung during "Dazed and Confused," also the violin bow, and a slight bit of "Black Sabbath" at one moment. There's a cool guitar jam at the end of "Dazed and Confused" that could probably even be considered a song of its own. The camera work, while it was generally quite weak throughout, does some interesting things at times, such as going around 360 degrees as some points, and at one point in "Stairway to Heaven" there is a cool split-screen mirror doubling thing, like Prince did in "When Doves Cry," highlighting Jimmy Page playing guitar (and another of Robert Plant quadrupled. Of course, in other parts you get the sense that shots from other parts of the night have been stitched edited together, and there is occasionally the feeling that what we're watching is authentic - apparently some gaps in footage were filled by having the band re-shoot on a recreated stage in 1974, aping their movements of that night in New York. But the band is tight, and it is amazing how, after a 20 minute digression in the solo of "Dazed and Confused," the band gets right back into the song without stumbling in the slightest.

There are also subtly amusing bits, like when Robert Plant flashes the two-finger salute with one hand and the V for Victory with the other during the "you know sometimes words have two meanings" lyric. Of course, there's also the famous "Moby Dick" drum solo where everyone goes off, that show Bonzo throwing away the sticks and using his hands to drum, splicing elegantly at one point to a clip of Jason Bonham on the drums - he must have been five years old in the shot. Interesting in "Whole Lotta Love," you actually see Jimmy Page for the first time stepping up to the mic to perform some sort of backup vocals in the chorus, although you don't really hear him. Why that song and no other? Nice shot of Jimmy playing the theremin in "Whole Lotta Love," then Robert in Jimmy's underarm. Cool shot of Orange amp head at 1:58:23. Robert ad-libs a lyric "some are lined with gold - Acapulco Gold." They finish the set and Bonzo attacks a gong with a flaming mallet, and the gong frame lights up. The band walks offstage, the house lights come on, and the band gets into their limo and moves on. The band are seen at the airport getting into the Starship, and that's all there is.

Besides the opening fantasy scene, four others appear throughout the movie; the first one spliced into the concert is John Paul Jones', which comes during a long organ and guitar interval in "No Quarter," it shows him playing a huge church organ, then riding around in a mask with three other masked horsemen, before he returns home to a Victorian household and his beautiful wife and daughter (played by Jimmy Page's girlfriend at the time and their daughter). Robert's fantasy scene is during "The Song Remains The Same" and "The Rain Song," it shows him on a beach with a sword, riding around on a horse, galloping, eating a big red toadstool he found in the forest, the sword burning on the beach at night, a castle where he uses his falcon to attack people in the castle, then he goes up and has a sword fight, rescuing a damsel in distress. Great long shot of him riding in the mountains, the camera pulls back to show the gigantic valley he's entering. Jimmy's fantasy scene is in "Dazed and Confused" and shows a mountain at night, a full moon, Jimmy climbing up the mountain (the way renowned occultist and mountaineer Alistair Crowley, his idol, did on so many treacherous passes), kind of an odd thought for such an un-athletic person. He reaches a ledge where a man is standing, it is The Hermit from the Tarot deck (and also seen on the band's fourth album). The Hermit lifts his head and regresses in age until you realise it's Jimmy Page, then a baby Jimmy, then a foetus in the womb, then a flash of lightning, then he ages again into The Hermit (later in "Dazed and Confused" there's also a cool section where a shot of Jimmy freezes and the camera zooms up into his eye and cuts to a documentary scene). John Bonham's "fantasy" sequence in "Moby Dick" is more like shots of him hanging out with his family. He's got shorter hair than he did onstage in 1973, and is shown with some sort of a mullet, playing pool, hugging his wife.

Documentary clips that are interspersed show Robert and Peter talking, Peter Grant arguing about how they caught people selling bootleg material inside the venue - posters - and arguing with the venue manager about it, security cops and fans hanging around outside, a cop on horseback saying "no comment," guys getting let in without tickets, a guy getting chased and nabbed and taken into a toilet by security cops, another guy getting ejected, there is also some footage concerning the lost \$200,000, for which there was a press conference at the time and some of the people involved were taken in for questioning.

The extras on the second disc are not bad, although there's nothing really remarkable there either. There's a news report from a Tampa TV, showing lots of long-hairs and parking lots full of 1970s gas guzzlers, channel that is probably the crappiest bit of news reporting that I've ever heard, talking about the biggest crowd ever assembled in "the history of the world!!" Yes, 50,000 people were there, and scraggly mustachioed John Jones reported on it. "I'm pleased to say that one of the group's four members has my same name, that's John Paul Jones," he cleverly points out. He repeats himself, "Now, I said this was the largest single performance crowd ever to attend any concert in the history of the world, and I meant it!" The host then jumps in and repeats John Jones' intro of the band: "Their names are Robert Plant, John Benham, Jimmy Page, and John Paul Jones. Robert, Jimmy, John and John; doesn't quite have the appeal of John, Paul, George and Ringo, but they certainly have the drawing power of the Beatles." Hey - who's "John Benham?" Sheesh. There's also some more footage of the robbery of \$200,000, a small part of which was put in the film, as well as the original film trailer. Then there's an 8-minute long interview with Robert Plant and manager Peter Green on a boat going down the Thames, not of much interest except when Robert hints at how they "rented the sharks," referring to the infamous shark incident with the groupie. There are four other tracks that weren't cut into the movie:

"Over The Hills And Far Away," "Celebration Day," "Misty Mountain Hop," and "The Ocean." All of the performances are straight, meaning no cutting into documentary footage or fantasy sequences.

July 27, 28, and 29, 1973 New York, NY US

Madison Square Garden

Setlist:

Rock and Roll, Celebration Day, (Bring It On Home intro) Black Dog, Over the Hills and Far Away, Misty Mountain Hop, Since I've Been Loving You, No Quarter, The Song Remains the Same, Rain Song, Dazed and Confused (incl. San Francisco), Stairway to Heaven, Moby Dick, Heartbreaker, Whole Lotta Love (incl. Let That Boy Boogie), The Ocean.

Notes:

The gigs at MSG are filmed and recorded for the group's feature movie, *The Song Remains the Same*, and accompanying soundtrack album, as well as the 2003 dvd. A remastered edition of the film & soundtrack are released in November 2007.

Review: Led Zeppelin Rocks to a Close at Garden

I saw the Friday opening of the Led Zeppelin concert from backstage, feeling the weight and response of the packed Madison Square Garden. It was possibly the best place to test the power of the British rock group, making the final dates of its current and very successful American tour.

And power it is – Led Zeppelin provides a kind of tent-show hard rock revivalism, healing and providing succor to the faithful, on a stage that throughout the evening became cluttered with smoke, dry-ice fumes and that most privileged of rock 'n' roll people, the film-maker.

Led Zeppelin remains unchanged. The group may perform different pieces, but the effect is the same. Jimmy Page's lead guitar still dominates and mixes and merges with Robert Plant's agile voice and Nureyev pirouetting to provide the basic essence of Zeppelin.

And Page is still into musical freakiness; dramatically dragging a violin bow across his guitar, he did his familiar squealing impersonation before boogieing off.

Page's guitar more often than not sounds like thunder, but for all the power and fury at their disposal, the stage had much scaffolding on either side to hold the equipment, Zeppelin manages to provide some separation of instruments in the blare.

The group and the loyalty of its pilgrims out front (who remained shouting for an encore after the group had left) provide solidarity to hard rock. (*NYTimes*, July '73)

<http://ledzeppelin.com/show/july-27-1973>

Variety (August 1973): Led Zeppelin Wraps Up U.S. Tour with Record Gates and \$4-Million Gross

Led Zeppelin's U.S. tour, which wound up at Madison Square Garden, N.Y. Sunday (29th), shattered attendance records, many previously held by the Beatles and grossed some \$4,000,000. Latter figure for the 33 dates is unofficial as the British quartet began withholding such info after breaking Beatles marks to launch the tour in Atlanta and Tampa.

The Garden concert was the third consecutive sellout at the arena, where a \$7.50 top usually means a \$130,000 gross potential. The three Concerts East shows would come to \$390,000. The May 4 opener at Braves Stadium, Atlanta, drew 39,236 patrons who paid \$246,000, the largest concert crowd in Georgia's history. Previously high was 33,000 drawn to the same stadium by the Beatles in 1965.

Next night, Led Zeppelin drew 56,800 to Tampa Stadium with a \$309,000 gross. The previous mark for a single concert in the U.S. was believed to have been the \$301,000 paid by 55,000 at the famed Beatles Shea Stadium, N.Y. concert, also in 1965.

The rockers, who performed without opening acts, played to more than 100,000 customers in California in less than a week, including a California record 39,304 at Kezar stadium, San

Francisco, June 2. Previous mark of 45,000 was set by Grand Funk Railroad two years ago.

They sold out Dallas and Ft. Worth back to back, virtually unheard of previously, drawing 10,000 to Dallas Memorial Auditorium May 18 and 13,500 to Tarrant County Convention Centre.

<http://ledzeppelin.com/show/july-29-1973>

Robert Plant

Lyrics

Plant's lyrics with Led Zeppelin were often mystical, philosophical and spiritual, alluding to events in classical and Norse mythology, such as the "Immigrant Song", which refers to Valhalla and Viking conquests. However, the song "No Quarter" is often misunderstood to refer to the god Thor; the song actually refers to Mount Thor (which is named after the god). Another example is "The Rain Song."

Plant was also influenced by J. R. R. Tolkien, whose book series inspired lyrics in some early Led Zeppelin songs. Most notably the "Battle of Evermore", "Misty Mountain Hop" and "Ramble On" contain verses referencing Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Conversely, Plant sometimes used more straightforward blues-based lyrics dealing primarily with sexual innuendo, as in "The Lemon Song", "Trampled Under Foot", and "Black Dog".

Welsh mythology also forms a basis of Plant's interest in mystical lyrics. He grew up close to the Welsh border and would often take summer trips to Snowdonia. Plant bought a Welsh sheep farm in 1973, and began taking Welsh lessons and looking into the mythology of the land (such as *Black Book of Carmarthen*, *Book of Taliesin*, etc.) Plant's first son, Karac, was named after the Welsh warrior Caratacus. The song title "Bron-Yr-Aur Stomp" is named after the 18th Century Welsh cottage *Bron-Yr-Aur* owned by a friend of his father; and later inspired the song "Bron-Yr-Aur." The songs "Misty Mountain Hop," "That's the Way," and early dabbings in what would become "Stairway to Heaven" were written in Wales and lyrically reflect Plant's mystical view of the land. Critic Steve Turner suggests that Plant's early and continued experiences in Wales served as the foundation for his broader interest in the mythologies he revisits in his lyrics (including those myth systems of Tolkien and the Norse).^[9]

The passion for diverse musical experiences drove Plant to explore Africa, specifically Morocco, whose musical inspiration most evidently culminated in the classic track "Kashmir" (which is not in North Africa, but rather in India). Both he and Jimmy Page revisited these influences during their reunion album *No Quarter: Jimmy Page and Robert Plant Unledded* in 1994. In his solo career, Plant again tapped from these influences many times, most notably in the 2002 album, *Dreamland*.

Undoubtedly one of Plant's most significant and influential achievements with Led Zeppelin was his contribution to the track "Stairway to Heaven", an epic rock ballad featured on *Led Zeppelin IV* that drew influence from folk, blues, Celtic traditional music and hard rock among other genres. Most of the lyrics of the song were written spontaneously by Plant in 1970 at Headley Grange. While never released as a single, the song has topped charts as the greatest song of all time on various polls around the world.

Plant is also recognised for his lyrical improvisation in Led Zeppelin's live performances, often singing verses previously unheard on studio recordings. One of the most famous Led Zeppelin musical devices involves Plant's vocal mimicking of band mate Jimmy Page's guitar effects. This can be heard in the songs "How Many More Times", "Dazed and Confused", "The Lemon Song", "You Shook Me", "Nobody's Fault But Mine" and "Sick Again".

He is also known for his light-hearted, humorous, and unusual on-stage banter, often referred to as "plantations." Plant often discusses the origin and background of the songs during his shows, and sometimes provides social comment as well. He frequently talks about American blues musicians as his inspiration, mentioning artists like

Robert Johnson, Howlin' Wolf, Blind Willie Johnson, and Willie Dixon at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony and the 2007 Ahmet Ertegun Tribute Concert with Led Zeppelin.

Stage persona

Plant enjoyed great success with Led Zeppelin throughout the 1970s and developed a compelling image as the charismatic rock-and-roll front man, similar to contemporaries such as Roger Daltrey of The Who and Jim Morrison of The Doors.^[10] With his mane of long blond hair and powerful, bare-chested appearance, Plant helped perhaps more than any other artist to create the "god of rock and roll" or "rock god" archetype. On stage, Robert was particularly active in live performances, often dancing, jumping, snapping his fingers, clapping, making emphatic gestures to emphasize a lyric or cymbal crash, throwing back his head, or placing his hands on his hips. As the 1970s progressed he, along with the other members of Led Zeppelin, became increasingly flamboyant onstage and wore more elaborate, colorful clothing and jewelry.

According to Ian Fortnam, "once [Plant] had a couple of US tours under his belt, 'Percy' Plant swiftly developed a staggering degree of bravado and swagger that irrefutably enhanced Led Zeppelin's rapidly burgeoning appeal."^[3] In 1994, during his "Unleaded" tour with Jimmy Page, Plant himself reflected tongue-in-cheek upon his Led Zeppelin showmanship:

I can't take my whole persona as a singer back then very seriously. It's not some great work of beauty and love to be a rock-and-roll singer. So I got a few moves from Elvis and one or two from Sonny Boy Williamson and Howlin' Wolf and threw them all together.^[11]

9. [△] "Stairway to Heaven, Paved with Gold: Led Zeppelin's Snowdonia." *The Independent*, 6 April 1991.
10. [△] "Their Time is Gonna Come", *Classic Rock Magazine: Classic Rock Presents Led Zeppelin*, 2008.
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