

Robert Plant: Now and Zen

Music Review
 ○○○ 3/4
 By Matthew Filippi
 Entertainment Editor

Robert Plant feels the touch of Led Zeppelin on his new solo album, *Now and Zen*. For those of you who are thinking, "It's about time someone reviewed some good hard Rock-n-Roll," my sentiments exactly; it's about time some good hard Rock-n-Roll has been released to be reviewed.

Plant doesn't need any make-up, glitter, tight jeans or anyone to write his lyrics and songs for him like a lot of the hard rock musicians of today, such as Bon Jovi, Bruce Springsteen, Poison and a new band called Guns and Roses who sings, "I want to watch you bleed," in one of their songs. Plant comments, "These guys, the Bon Jovi and company, when they weren't selling

anything, they saw the mechanism working. They saw they had to follow the now strongly dictated lines of the commercial process, to come up with the choruses and wiggle your ass at the right moment." He goes on to say, "It's immaterial whether it's hard rock or not. Fortunately, I had success before a lot of these new rules, so I say, F--- it." (Rolling Stone, Issue 522 March 24th, 1988)

Plant receives many demo tapes in his mail. It wasn't until he received a tape from Phil Johnstone containing a song that Phil co-wrote, "Heaven Knows," that he realized that he wants to be a bit harder. "I want to play stuff that's exciting again," says Plant. (Rolling Stone)

I agree that "Heaven Knows" is a great song but I don't see how it inspired Plant to go back to his Zeppelin roots. The song sounds

like a Robert Plant song more than a Led Zeppelin song, but if it's enough to get Plant to record some more pseudo-Zeppelin songs, then "Yea" for Johnstone. According to Plant, Johnstone is a full-fledged Zeppelin fan. Plant liked Johnstone so much that he wrote seven out of nine tracks with him on *Now and Zen*.

The only song that could pass for a Zeppelin tune on *Now and Zen* is "Helen of Troy." It contains catchy guitar riffs, which is a characteristic of Zeppelin, and strong bass drum and snare beats. There are other songs which sound like Zeppelin in some parts but the choruses reflect Robert Plant's solo career. This is apparent in the song, "Billy's Revenge."

It's really a shame to compare someone's future career with something they have done in the past. But this is what Plant wants,

he wants to be as spontaneous as Led Zeppelin used to be. He even has Jimmy Page play guitar solos on "Heaven Knows" and "Tall Cool One." On the album cover there are "Zoso" symbols to represent the songs that Page plays on.

"Tall Cool One" has a catchy line which Plant belts out, "Lighten up baby I'm in love with you." This song is quite repetitive but if you can make it through all the repetition, it has a very creative ending in which Plant samples some tracks from old Zeppelin songs like, "Whole Lotta Love," "Dazed and Confused," and "Black Dog."

Plant's vocal ability is outstanding. Nearly reaching forty, Plant's voice shows no signs of his age. One would think that after screaming during hundreds of Zeppelin concerts his voice would be worthless by the age of forty.

Instead his voice is remarkably clear and shows no signs of scratchiness or stretching. If anything, his voice may be getting better.

Plant's lyrics are loose. He believes that this is a part of his singing in the past. He must be as conservative as he has been on past solo albums. On "Tall Cool One" he sings, "With my one hand loose I aim to satisfy / You like my loving machine, I like your bloodshot eyes." In "Heaven Knows" he sings, "Now I find myself fully occupied and half alive / with your head, heart, arms and legs wrapped around my family pride."

The album contains some potential hit songs including a slow song, "Ship of Fools," which lightly plucks beautiful guitar riffs and reflects Plant's solo career more than anything he's done with

Zep. This song will be a future release. The album is a definite step forward in Plant's solo career. And with Plant "stepping backward" in order to move forward, his next solo album should be even better.

I must comment on the production quality of the cassette version of *Now and Zen*. Don't buy this album on cassette! The sound quality is nauseating and the first side has an annoying extended end in order to make it even with the second side. This would have been much more pleasing if they would have just put one of the songs from the second side on to the first side. This can be especially annoying if you're listening to the cassette on your car stereo and you have to listen to minutes of "dead air" before the tape flips sides. I hope the quality of the album and CD is much better or this could be a major downfall for *Now and Zen*.

After the Reunion

Book Review
 ○○○ 1/2
 by Vail Weller
 Feature Editor

I actually found a book to read for pleasure in the Behrend library. When I saw the cover, I had a faint feeling of recognition - I could've seen it in a bookstore or in an ad for a Book-of-the-Month Club. Anyway, I picked it up and read the book flap and decided to check it out. I went back up to my apartment and started to read it (this was at approximately noon) and I did not put it down until I had finished it at 7:00 PM.

The book is called *After the Reunion* and it is the twelfth book written by Rona Jaffe, a graduate of Radcliffe. This fiction novel is the story of four women who also graduated from Radcliffe and of three men who are graduates of Harvard. It takes place 25 years after their college graduation, when the 1957 women's class of Radcliffe were sent questionnaires.

They have all become

successful in their careers and appear to lead normal, happy lives. But the questions they are asked to answer start to show us that in reality every one of their lives is unhappy, unfulfilled and full of secrets. The questionnaire asked:

1. What were your hopes, dreams, and expectations when you graduated from college, in terms of work, love and family life?

2. Did you achieve them?

3. Was there a point in your life where your values, dreams, and/or expectations changed? Please explain.

As you enter into these people's lives, little by little, you begin to identify with most of them. After hearing about their college lives: sexual behavior, scholastic indifference/perseverance, goals, and marriages soon after graduation, you soon begin to see friends of your own in these people. I found this to be one of the most appealing aspects of the book. I began to really care about them. I felt for them during their struggles

Review Ratings:

- Poor
- Average
- Above Average
- Excellent

and honestly felt as if I had accomplished something when one of them did.

Their lives change after college - they are all privileged and attractive - people whom others might envy. They settle into beautiful homes, raise children and go about their careers. But at the same time, Jaffe gives us a very realistic view of today's common and uncommon problems.

We are introduced (on a very personal and feeling level) to a wealthy person's drug addiction. We see the hell of a supposedly happy marriage falling apart and resorting to affairs out of sheer boredom. We meet the retarded child of two perfect parents and watch as they alienate her because she doesn't "look right" in their family. We see a homosexual man and his wife

who love each other faultlessly but only on a platonic level. We come to know a single successful career woman struggling to find a committed relationship while still holding on to her career independence.

During a fantastically well written series of connections, all of these people end up intertwined in each other's lives. The relationships that they form help them all to grow up twenty five years after college. This book has many interesting twists and by the end, I was left with a feeling of hope and anticipation of my future life. You come to see how much people actually change as they mature and that it is never too late to go after your dreams. Get down to the library and check it out - it will leave you feeling refreshed.

WINDMILLS OF THE GODS

Book Review

By Nanette Quatchak
 Feature Editor

Sidney Sheldon is the author of many number-one international best sellers that have all been made into major feature films or television mini-series. *Windmills of the Gods*, Sheldon's newest novel, is no exception. This story, along with all of his previous books, gives you a behind-the-scenes look at a particular occupation and lifestyle. In this case, you gain a better understanding of a United States ambassador in a communist country.

Mary Ashley, a professor at

Kansas State University, is appointed the new ambassador, leaving behind the only life she has known. Even before she begins her new job she finds herself on the hitlist of one of the world's most successful assassins. If this is not compelling enough, there is also an enemy association that plans on destroying everything that she accomplishes. Mary also becomes involved with a doctor from the French embassy and her deputy chief of mission. As the story progresses she realizes that one of them is out to kill her.

The reason I enjoy Sheldon's novels so much is due to his incredibly detailed knowledge of so many occupations and lifestyles.

SEE *Windmills*, pg 6

"Frantic" Craftsmanship

Frantic - Movie Review
 ○○○ 1/2
 By Brett Taylor
 Contributing Writers

In the movie *Witness*, Harrison Ford set a standard of acting for himself so high that he may never be able to match it. In his new movie, *Frantic*, he comes pretty close, though, and affirms his status as one of the most powerful actors of the decade.

In *Frantic*, Ford plays a surgeon who was visiting Paris, where a medical conference was being held. Within an hour of arriving at his hotel with his wife, she disappears without a trace, and he is left with only one clue: a suitcase she accidentally mistook for her own at the airport. The search for his wife leads him into the seamy undercurrent of Paris, and into a strained partnership with a sleazy young French woman who routinely smuggles drugs into the country.

This film is relatively static in the beginning: a full forty minutes pass before our hero even thinks of checking the jumbled baggage for clues. An action picture this is not. Instead, the movie probes the psyche of a man stranded and seemingly helpless in a foreign country, forced into circumstances far beyond his control. There is an obvious debt to the films of Alfred Hitchcock here, where ordinary people are ruthlessly dropped into extraordinary situations. Ford is excellent as a frustrated and frightened man in a deadly game, who must appear tough and uncompromising.

Also excellent is Emmanuelle Seigner, the mercenary girl who is the lifeline between Ford and his wife. She is at once enticing and infuriating, as she aids Ford in his search, but then foils his hostage exchange by demanding money from the kidnapers. She is also blatantly sexual before the surgeon, even though he makes perfectly clear his one and only purpose: the rescue of his wife, regardless of the cost. It is fascinating watching their relationship evolve, because we know it must destruct somehow if and when the wife is found. There is also a great deal of humor involved in their exchanges, as the two opposites bail each other out of trouble.

The plot is weak at some points, and the story is confused by a number of different groups all pursuing the object which is now in the possession of Ford. The problems are few, however, and the movie proves to be completely satisfying. It is sporadically violent, sexy, funny and frustrating. This film is the product of masterful craftsmanship, a sturdy construction founded on Ford's superstar ability and director Roman Polanski's care and experience.

Also worthy of note: although the entire film is set in Paris, the Eiffel Tower is shown only once, in a quick and incidental shot. Instead, attention is focused on a miniature replica of the Statue of Liberty, looking small and ironic and out of place; much like the hero himself. Again, the film displays a remarkable level of care and craftsmanship not often found in movies today.

Grammies-Smash or Trash?

The Grammies - Review
 By D&K's Discount Review
 Contributing Writers

Staged in glamorous Radio City Music Hall, the Grammies returned home to New York for the first time in seven years. Hosted by Billy Crystal, the show was given a boost with a cavalcade of celebrity impersonations.

First on the agenda was the award for best female pop vocalist which went to Whitney Houston for "I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me)." In our opinion the Grammy should have gone to Belinda Carlisle whose smooth flowing rendition of "Heaven is a Place on Earth" was much more pleasing to the ear than Whitney's annoying rehash of "How Will I Know." What's her next song going to be? "How will I know if I wanna dance with somebody (who loves me)?" And isn't there something a little queer about her producer?

Best male pop vocalist went to Sting for his "Bring on the Night" Live LP. Needless to say his victory was quite a surprise especially considering that it came over favorite Michael Jackson, who was also trumped out in three other awards.

U2 seized two Grammies for album of the year and best rock group performance for their album "The Joshua Tree." Their intoxicating style both mesmerizes and bonds listeners to their cause. They were the obvious choice in both these categories.

Alas, Whitney, you're not alone on our gripe list. If anyone can explain why Paul Simon's album "Graceland" won record of the year, please clue us in. In the first place it is ridiculous that a song off last year's winning album was even nominated. In the second place, South African tribal melodies just don't compare with U2.

The most outrageous portion of the evening was when Little Richard and Buster Poindexter presented the award for best new artist. But before Jody Watley was revealed the winner, we were treated with Richard's explanation of why he deserves a Grammy. Tears were shed when the well-deserving Jody graciously accepted her award.

The award for best comedy recording went to the untamable Robin Williams for "Live at the Met." If you haven't seen or heard this it's simply a must. Unfortunately, the hyperactive comedy hero was unable to accept the award in person.

Other winners were Bruce Springsteen for best rock vocalist, Linda Ronstadt and James Taylor's "Somewhere Out There" for song of the year, Frank Zappa's "Jazz from Hell" as best rock instrumental, and Bill Medley and Jennifer Warnes' "I've had the Time of My Life" for best pop duet.

In conclusion, despite the fact that our preferences weren't consistent with the academies', we feel that this year's Grammy awards show was well worth watching and superior to previous shows.



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