

Entertainment

A salute to rock classics

Gary Nolan climbs Zeppelin's stairway to success

Editor's note: Critic Gary Nolan continues his examination of some of the music world's greatest contributions. This is the second installment in a five-part series.

by Gary Nolan
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As the wrapper is peeled back on a Led Zeppelin album, the blues power and energy soon to fill the room is sure to wake the neighbors and shake the walls a little. Led Zeppelin's fourth album barely gets the nod over their first album as the pinnacle of the group's releases. This album is unquestionably one of the best ever assembled. Denoted by the several names of *Led Zeppelin IV*, *Zoso*, *Untitled*, and *Runes*, it was released in 1971 to a highest chart position of number two.

The reason for the discrepancy in the album name lies in the mind of group members Jimmy Page and Robert Plant. They, by the point of release in 1971, had acquired a rather large following. The group feared that the sales of their upcoming release would be because of their name and popularity rather than in the strength of the music. It was a concern that the music would be overshadowed. To counteract this they decided to release the album with only ambiguous cover art, and nowhere on the sleeve would the Led Zeppelin name or a title appear. Atlantic Records, however, insisted that a name be included on the jacket, but officially the release remains untitled.

The strength of Led Zeppelin lies not only in their originality, but in the fact that they, in essence, have three lead instruments. These are Jimmy Page's revolutionary lead guitar, John Bonham's driving drums, and Robert Plant's charismatic voice. John Paul Jones' keyboards and bass serve as a glue to mesh these powers together. Led Zeppelin virtually invented heavy metal and then served to improve and craft their invention into an institution that still remains today.

As the release begins the listener is startled by the loud bluesy voice of Plant in "Black Dog." This track serves to prepare the listener for the driving tracks that are to follow. The guitar of Page and vocals of Plant lead hand in hand through the track at times even sounding like a duel. The two march well to the beat of Bonham who leads them along at a brisk beat on the sculpted path laid by Jones' bass part.

As the listener starts to

recover from "Black Dog" he is shifted into overdrive by the now famous introductory drum blast in "Rock and Roll." When Plant screeches out "It's been a long since we rock and rolled," one can't help but take notice. Page's guitar remains impeccable throughout the song to yield the classic track's smooth

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progression. Jones is, as usual, a fulcrum, releasing the talents of the other members in turn. Finally the drum conclusion remains one of the best endings of a song, a fitting suffix to a classic track.

"The Battle of Evermore" tells a tale of darkness, a reflection of the fascination of the members for the occult and satanism. This Celtic tale yields a fine music background and the vocals accent it well.

The next song, an unquestionable masterpiece, needs no introduction, for the acoustic guitar part remains one of the most famous contemporary works. "Stairway to Heaven," a majestic tale of rebirth and reflection, remains most likely the best song that rock and roll has ever produced. Its almost eight minute length is a progression into sensitivity and sincerity. Words fail to truly state the strength in which the music and lyrics flow. As the acoustic start flows softly until suddenly Bonham enters with his contribution and the pace is picked up. Another transition is begun when Page abandons the acoustic guitar for an electric, and jams the track to an even higher level. Plant's vocals and lyrics remain in their usual perfect realm. The final transition fades as Plant utters the last "And she's buying a Stairway to Heaven." This completes the track by bringing it back to the beginning, almost a rebirth is sensed in the reflection.

"Misty Mountain Hop" completes the band's hippie image as a tale of reminiscing with people with flowers in their hair is told. They are invited to remain with them while

abandoning the outside world. In the words "I know it's only a state of mind," Plant defines the sixties' carefree attitude that many seek to recapture today.

"Going to California" captures the soft acoustic side of this heavy band. It features Page's debut on mandolin, and Plant's vocals sung with sensitivity. This song exemplifies the versatility in the band, as the listener realizes they are more than just a heavy metal band.

The album concludes with "When the Levee Breaks." This is a driving upswing cornered on the frame of Bonham's loud, incredible beat. The song, instead of marching to this beat, is forced to stomp to it, concluding a classic release on a rockin' intense track.

As metal groups progress into lightning speed guitar, and wailing vocals, one must always reflect to where it all began, and there is great doubt that it will get any better than Led Zeppelin's fourth.

Entertainment Briefs

Rock Hall of Fame announces inductees

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame will induct eight new members in 1990. The January 17th ceremony will honor The Who, the Kinks, the Four Tops, Simon and Garfunkel, The Four Seasons, Bobby Darin, the Platters and Hank Ballard. The Hall of Fame Museum, to be built in Cleveland, may be relocated unless the city can raise \$5 million by November 15.

Axl Rose to leave band?

At a Los Angeles concert earlier this month, vocalist Axl Rose surprised the crowd of over 75,000 when he announced the show would be his last with band Guns N' Roses. The next night, however, Rose issued a five-minute statement which assured fans that he would remain part of the band. GNR guitarist Izzy Stradlin has pleaded guilty to urinating on the carpet of a USAir plane. Stradlin was given a \$2,000 fine and was ordered to pay \$1,000 for cleanup costs.

Survey links country music to drinking

A recent medical research study has proven a relationship between country music and heavy drinking. The study was done in neighborhood bars where heavy drinkers preferred to listen to slower-paced, lonesome, self-pitying music. The survey referred to those it studied as a "rowdy subculture....fulfilling the prophecy of the lyrics of the songs being played."

Video parties banned at Iowa State

It is now illegal for students at Iowa State to show videotaped movies to large groups of friends. This action by school officials comes after pressure by movie industry lawyers. The showing of these videotapes violates copyright laws, which carry a possible \$25,000 fine for schools which allow the showing of these tapes.

Prizes

24 HOUR
DANCE MARATHON

Contests


DANCIN'

THE

NIGHT

AWAY

Nov 18th & 19th
in the
Winter Garden



Sign UP at the
Winter Green Gorge this
Thurs. & Fri. from 10am to 3pm
or
Contact: Commuter Council
898-6542

Money Raised Benefits

UNITED WAY