

Puluche Album Review Rubric ©

| Artist: Led Zeppelin | | Album Title: Physical Graffiti (1975) - Swan Song | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|---|--|---------------|
| Categories | Criteria | | | | Rating |
| | 4 - Exemplary | 3 - Proficient | 2 - Developing | 1 - Underdeveloped | |
| <u>Compositions</u> | Every song is quality and has a distinctive appeal of its own. Tracks have a perfect flow and continuity that enhance the album's overall appeal. | Many quality songs with distinctive appeal. Tracks have a good flow and continuity that enhance the album's overall appeal. | Some quality songs with distinctive appeal but not sustained. Track flow and continuity have little effect on album's overall appeal. | Few to no quality songs lacking any distinctive appeal. Track flow and continuity have little/poor effect on album's overall appeal. | 20 |
| <u>Breaking Ground</u> | Has impressive elements of high creativity and is experimentally innovative. Developing own signature sound. Shows extreme growth and/or potential as a substantial and influential artist. | Features elements of creativity and uniqueness. Shows growth and/or potential as a developing and influential artist. | Has very few moments of creativity and uniqueness. Shows little growth and/or some potential as a developing artist. Displays some stagnation or notable regression as an established artist. | Has no creativity and uniqueness. Shows no growth and/or little potential as a developing or established artist. | 20 |
| <u>Engagement</u> | Music has a transcending quality with numerous songs that grab the listener on respective emotional/social levels. Many songs have an addictive effect and memorable quality. | Music has transcending qualities with some songs that grab the listener on respective emotional/social levels. Some songs have an addictive effect and memorable quality. | Music has some transcending qualities with few songs that appeal on respective emotional/social levels, as well as having any addictive or memorable qualities. | Music has minimal transcending qualities and few to no songs that appeal on respective emotional/social levels. No positive memorable qualities. | 20 |
| <u>Lyrics</u> | Has a strong lyrical voice with multiple thought-provoking messages with clear and/or possible meanings and depth. | Has notable lyrical voice with some thought-provoking messages and/or possible meanings and depth. | Has limited lyrical voice with few-to-no thought-provoking messages, meanings and depth. | Has a weak lyrical voice with no thought-provoking messages or meanings and seriously lacks any depth. | 20 |
| <u>Production</u> | Masterful sound quality with noticeable studio techniques employed that demand headphone inquiry. Vision flawlessly executed. Overall packaging and artwork effectively compliments and enhances album enjoyment. | Very good sound quality with some noticeable studio techniques that demand headphone inquiry. Vision is acceptable. Overall packaging and artwork compliments album enjoyment. | Inconsistent sound quality with questionable studio techniques employed. Vision is questionable. Overall packaging and artwork fails to compliment album. | Questionable to poor sound quality. Lacks vision. Overall packaging and artwork fails to compliment album. | 20 |

Comments

There is little debate that no band was bigger or more heavily-settled on top of the rock scene during the mid-70s than Led Zeppelin. After the successful releases of their first five albums under Atlantic Records and years of stadium-filling tours, the band set up Swan Song Records in 1974 and released their final four studio albums under this label. The first of these was *Physical Graffiti*, an ambitious double-album that many hold to be one of the best in their discography.

Released on February 24th, 1975, *Physical Graffiti* marked the band's return following a two-year hiatus after *Houses of the Holy*, a musical turning point for the band in terms of their ever-growing style, technique, and originality. This new flair proved to be permanent, as many of the new album's songs seem to be ventures into their own styles, whether it be blues or Mid-Eastern influences, and this musical melting pot continued to display their unsurpassable talents.

Side one begins with the strutting, bluesy riffs of "Custard Pie," a sex-filled number that is finished off with a hard rock-driven Jimmy Page guitar solo and accompanying harmonica by vocalist Robert Plant. "Custard Pie" is followed by "The Rover," a favorite of many die-hard Zeppelin fans that showcases John Bonham's undeniable talent on the drums, and "In My Time of Dying," an 11-minute wonder that takes on "Jesus Make Up My Dying Bed," a traditional gospel song that Zeppelin "borrowed" and updated, refined, and took to the next level with Page's slide-guitar riffs, John Paul Jones' bass, and Robert Plant's inner-gospel vocals.

Side two takes us into "Houses of the Holy," a song that has minimal fuss, but a lot of power – it's casual and soulful, yet it is one of the catchiest songs on the album due to Page's instantly recognizable blues riff - a stand-out on the album along with "Trampled Under Foot," which evolved from a jam session into a masterpiece. In particular, Jones was the unheralded master behind many of the arrangements including his skillful clavinet groove that clearly presents itself throughout the song.

Side two ends with "Kashmir," arguably the most original, enlightened, forward-thinking track that Led Zeppelin has ever recorded. Influenced by Moroccan, Middle Eastern, and Indian music, with the instruments and words following different meters, "Kashmir's" eight-and-a-half minute glory provides a great transition into side three.

Beginning with "In The Light" and "Bron-Yr-Aur," the band slowed things down to take us on a cool, psychedelic journey. With Page using a violin bow on an acoustic guitar for the unique intro to "In The Light," and the six-string guitar for the short acoustic instrumental of "Bron-Yr-Aur," he shows his remarkable guitar playing abilities and continues to do so in "Down By The Seaside."

The side ends with "Ten Years Gone," a song about Plant's past girlfriend who, ten years earlier, had made him choose between her and his music. With Page's use of 14 guitar tracks to overdub the harmony section, and Plant's heartfelt lyrics, we should all be thankful for the choice that Plant made.

"Night Flight" and "The Wanton Song" which contains a sharp, forceful riff where Page switches back and forth between two notes one octave apart, open up side four, which continues with "Boogie With Stu," featuring Page on mandolin, Plant on guitar, and The Rolling Stones' manager Ian Stewart (Stu) on piano from a jam session.

The band ends the album on the same note it started - blues-driven rock, as heard in "Black Country

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| | <p>Woman” and “Sick Again,” a song about the band’s experience with teenage groupies. <i>Physical Graffiti</i> is heralded as one of Led Zeppelin’s best albums that secured their place as one of the greatest bands of all time and certainly the most important and successful mega-band of the 70s.</p> | |
| <u>Commendations</u> | <p>It is easy to see why <i>Physical Graffiti</i> is Led Zeppelin’s second most commercially successful release. The choice to make it a double album was an easy one for the band because it allowed them to include tracks that they normally wouldn’t have been able to, such as “Boogie With Stu,” and those that didn’t quite make the cut for <i>Houses of the Holy</i>, like the track of the same name that has become one of the band’s most identifiable.</p> <p>Another wonderful piece is “Kashmir”- all four members of Led Zeppelin agreed that it is one of their best musical achievements, and radio stations around the globe have agreed - its length is one that stations usually consider too long to play, and yet it is still one of the most requested rock songs today. “Ten Years Gone” is also a classic that has stood the test of time.</p> <p><i>Physical Graffiti</i> showcased the talents of Page, Plant, Bonham, and Jones both as a band and as individual musicians. This is something that is of the utmost importance for rock bands of the past, present and future. If musicians can stand apart and sound just as good as they do when they’re together, success is inevitable.</p> <p>After the release of <i>Physical Graffiti</i>, the album reached the No. 1 spot on <i>Billboard's Pop Albums Chart</i> and sold 8 million copies in the U.S. alone. Additionally, all previous Led Zeppelin albums simultaneously re-entered the Top 200 album chart, and <i>Physical Graffiti</i> was nominated for a Grammy for “Best Recording Package”- the sleeve’s design included a New York City tenement block that was chosen for its symmetry and interesting details that were tweaked to fit in the square album cover format. If you can get this album in LP format – do so!</p> | |
| <u>Next Steps</u> | <p>After the album’s release, the band took off on another sold out North American tour. However, in 1975, Plant and his wife were in a horrible car accident in Greece that caused him to be unable to tour.</p> <p>During this time, Led Zeppelin was considered to be the world's number one arena rock attraction. Sadly, tragedy struck again in 1980 when drummer John Bonham was found dead in his hotel room. The band canceled the rest of their scheduled tour and decided to disband.</p> <p>Inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995, the band has reunited a few times over the years with Bonham’s son, Jason, taking his father’s place on drums.</p> <p>Recently, Plant, Page and Jones were honored by U.S. President Barack Obama at the 2012 Kennedy Center Honors for their contribution to music, and the Led Zeppelin catalog became available on digital music service Spotify in December 2013.</p> | |
| <u>Reviewer</u> | Ariane Pepsin | <u>IRC:</u> Bill Pulice |