

Puluche Album Review Rubric ©

Artist: <u>Led Zeppelin</u>		Album Title: <u>Led Zeppelin (1969) - Atlantic</u>			
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>Lyrical Voice</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

In the name of all that is holy, *Led Zeppelin* is the Rock God's gift to music. I am not sure there is any mindset, organic or not, that one could be in to completely grasp Led Zeppelin's music, but there is so much power and authenticity in the sound that a sacred connection is established between listener and the music; thus, cognizance becomes irrelevant. Lead guitarist and band creator (via The Yardbirds) Jimmy Page himself said, "I don't think the critics could understand what we were doing."

Led Zeppelin, the band's debut album is a body of music that is so unique and unencumbered that meaning becomes intangible, and involvement transcends the metaphysical. It is difficult to discern whether or not there are hidden meanings within the lyrics but wording wise, simplicity may just be their weapon of choice. The lyrics are pretty accessible and don't seem to shelter any hidden meanings. The overall motif of the album is driven by some of rock and roll's quintessential themes - women and drugs.

The intricacy of lyrics is inconsequential as a complement to the music because each musician in the band is so extraordinarily gifted that the main priority is the staple sound they created.

Lead vocalist Robert Plant possesses unbelievable vocal range and control and his voice is so refined that it acts as another instrument in the band.

Led Zeppelin is not a band where one member's fame exceeds the other. Each musician has a mastery of his instrument and in his own right is idolized by singers, guitarists, drummers and bassists everywhere and has inspired many greats to become musicians.

Similarly, *Led Zeppelin* is not an album where one would simply not be familiar with the songs on it. It begins with the song "Good Times Bad Times," which previews the exceptional talent of the band. Drummer John Bonham showcases a complex drum part using double bass and the bell in the middle of the ride cymbal. It is dynamic and erratic. As musical anecdotes to Jimmy Page's explosive guitar solos, bassist John Paul Jones sets up the transitions with inconceivably phenomenal bass fills. The song opens with an instrumental prelude then the lyrics "In the days my youth, I was told what it means to be a man. Now I've reached that age, I've tried to do all those things the best I can." A simple transparent wording accepting societal conventions and expectations.

"Babe I'm Gonna Leave You," is the song on the album that proved Plant's versatility. His dynamic vocals on this track show a more subdued version of his voice and then when the songs pick up he erupts into his characteristic vocal cry. If Page was the new Guitar God, Plant was the perfect frontman with the golden locks and voice.

Led Zeppelin is criticized for skating dangerously close to plagiarizing folk musicians work. The song "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" was originally written by folk singer Anne Bredon who was not credited on the Led Zeppelin track, as they felt they had strayed really far from the original. The track is nearly seven minutes of pure catharsis as they exercise musical anticipation and unrelenting power using soul as a vice.

Part of the difficulty in categorizing Led Zeppelin is that they are considered one of the "godfathers of metal" yet they are clearly influenced by early rock, blues, jazz, and so much more. Their sound can get pretty heavy but there is not necessarily a clear standard.

Some of their greatest songs on the album are blues influenced; specifically "You Shook Me" and "I Can't Quit You Babe." Both songs follow a pretty traditional blues structure, and the groove of the tracks is

	<p>smooth and confident. In “You Shook Me” Page and Plant developed their infamous “call recall” between instruments and they work together as the guitar follows the vocals creating a psychedelic effect. The usage of keys and harmonica allude to traditional blues songs and altogether provide camaraderie to the idea of a conversation between instruments as they take over the back and forth.</p> <p>“I Can’t Quit You Babe” is the one song on the album where it seemed the lyrics weren’t saying exactly what they meant. The song seems to be using a woman as a euphemism for drugs and other addictions. A song that applies a jazz and rock combination is “How Many More Times.” Bonham uses a conventional jazz drum part which eventually becomes heavier and shifts into more of a rock feel as a crunchy harder rocking guitar riff is implemented. Although this track can be interpreted in many ways, it carries a semi misogynistic message implying that a woman’s love can be bought with material things, “I’ll give you all I’ve got to give. Rings, pearls, and all.”</p> <p>One of the more interesting nuances employed in this song is the marching drum fill, followed by an emptier part that seems detached from the previous part, then this leads into another section and then back to the original. It is structurally arbitrary leading to over eight minutes of purely great music. The New Yardbirds had arrived and their name was Led Zeppelin!</p>	
<p><u>Commendations</u></p>	<p>It has been heavily debated whether or not <i>Led Zeppelin</i> was composed majorly of plagiarized songs. Arguments bring up the problem that they did not credit certain artists, which is countered by the fact that they took the songs and changed them enough to pass as originals.</p> <p>“Dazed and Confused,” the fourth track on the album, is one of those songs that was not written by Zeppelin. It was originally written by singer-songwriter Jake Holmes and adapted by both The Yardbirds and then mastered by Jimmy Page’s Led Zeppelin. Unlike the original, Zeppelin elaborates on ghostly guitar and bass parts that create an eerie vibe – violin bow and all.</p> <p>The making of <i>Led Zeppelin</i> was a financially conservative process as the band had rehearsed and perfected their parts before going into the studio. They spent less than forty hours recording because they nailed each part in a minimal amount of takes. Innovative subtleties throughout the album should be attributed to the production. Jimmy Page took control of production in a collaborative effort with engineer, Glyn Johns. To give an idea of how powerful Robert Plant’s voice is, it was nearly impossible to eliminate the vocal tracks from bleeding into other tracks.</p>	
<p><u>Next Steps</u></p>	<p><i>Led Zeppelin</i> is a timeless body of work. In Plant’s own words “Led Zeppelin has been there through three generations of teenage angst,” and there is no reason why it wouldn’t survive more. The album is widely recognized as one of the greatest debut albums in rock history.</p> <p>Post <i>Led Zeppelin</i>, the band expanded on their discography creating seven high quality releases throughout the 1970s. The band built a colossal legacy within the music world, gracing the music world with a vast amount of infamous tracks.</p> <p>Led Zeppelin was inducted into The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995 and to this day is idolized by everyone from well-known musicians to the common man.</p>	

	During their Ahmet Ertegun Tribute Concert in December 2007, the band recorded the show and released <i>Celebration Day</i> in 2012, a DVD/CD that captures their most-likely farewell appearance in commendable fashion. Unfortunately for music fans of today, they are no longer touring and most likely will never perform again, but you can always watch their movie <i>The Song Remains The Same</i> which captures the very essence of Led Zeppelin live in their prime.
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