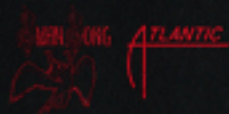
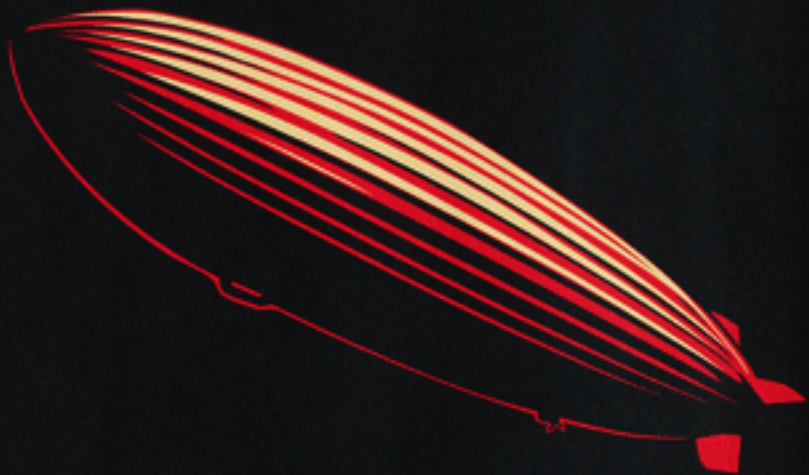


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LED-ZEPPELIN





## "HOT, NEW ENGLISH GROUP LED ZEPPELIN"

It was a modest announcement, a two-page press release issued in November 1968: "Atlantic Records has signed the hot, new English group Led Zeppelin to a long-term exclusive recording contract. Although the exact terms of the deal are secret, it can be disclosed that it is one of most substantial deals Atlantic has ever made."

Most of what followed was quick biography—Jimmy Page's history with The Yardbirds, where he had succeeded Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck as lead guitarist, and as one of the best and busiest session musicians in Britain; bassist John Paul Jones' success as an arranger of hit records for Donovan and The Rolling Stones, among many others. There were references to drummer John Bonham's already notorious solos as a member of American singer Tim Rose's touring band and to Robert Plant's blooming reputation as "one of England's outstanding young blues singers."

There was a promise too. "Top English and American rock musicians who have heard the tracks," the release said, referring to Zeppelin's imminent debut album, "have compared the LP to the best of Cream and Jimi Hendrix and have called Led Zeppelin the next group to reach the heights achieved by Cream and Hendrix."

That was audacious talk, a fat power chord in the face, at a time when Hendrix still walked the Earth and Cream were a fresh memory—the latter played their farewell shows that very month at London's Royal Albert Hall. In comparison, when Led Zeppelin opened their first North American tour in Denver, Colorado, on December 26, 1968, they were third on a bill to Vanilla Fudge and Spirit and treated like a doormat. The promoter, Plant told me years later, deducted the cost of the backstage grub—"this four-loaves-and-five-fishes thing"—from the band's pay. At other dates, Plant operated Zeppelin's P.A. system himself, onstage, and

Bonham often played without miking his kit (a minor annoyance as he was loud enough without electricity). In Detroit a local newspaper ad for Zeppelin's three-night stand at the Grande Ballroom announced the appearance of "Led Zeplin."

But as Page said later, recalling that tour, "You could feel something happening—first this row, then that row. It was like a tornado, and it went rolling across the country." By the end of 1969, Page, Plant, Jones, and Bonham had torn through North America four times, each time to bigger, sold-out audiences. In Britain, where they had been in clubs as The New Yardbirds as late as October 1968, Zeppelin quickly followed Cream into the Royal Albert Hall, filling it in June 1969 (and again in January 1970). In that first whiplash year, Led Zeppelin also released two of the most exciting and important rock albums ever made, *Led Zeppelin* and *Led Zeppelin II*—together, the fundamental bones of hard rock and heavy metal for the next four decades.

From the start, Led Zeppelin were working warriors. They toured like dogs—albeit in wild-boy luxury, fiercely protected by their manager, Peter Grant—and made eight studio albums (one a double LP) at a pace that now seems superhuman. Page claimed the total recording time for *Led Zeppelin* was 30 hours. The band made *II* on rare off days between shows in the summer of '69, in nearly a dozen different studios. "I remember we did vocal overdubs in an eight-track studio in Vancouver where they didn't even have proper headphones," Page recalled in a 1977 interview with Dave Schulps for the American magazine *Trans-Oceanic Trouser Press*. "Can you imagine that?"

Actually, yes. Even the band's harshest critics—and there were armies of them at the time—could not deny that Led Zeppelin had a rare drive to excel and conquer. "So many people are frightened to take a chance in life," Page told *Rolling Stone's* Cameron Crowe in 1975, "and there's so many chances you have to take."



**JOHN BONHAM: DRUMS**

Jones did not hesitate to give up the regular, lucrative checks from his studio gigs to be in Led Zeppelin; as soon as he heard about Page's plans for a new group, in the late summer of '68, he called Page and *asked* to join. Page himself was throwing dice when, on the recommendation of Terry Reid (who turned down Page's offer to be vocalist), he checked out and hired Plant, just 20 and unknown beyond the club grind in England's industrial Midlands. Page then took Plant's advice and grabbed the singer's friend, Bonham.

"It was a series of intense, dynamic crescendos, one right after the other," Plant told me, describing Zeppelin's first American shows in 1968 and '69. "There was no room for the letdown." That is also a perfect description of the power, confidence, and desire—the lust for liftoff—in these songs and performances. Led Zeppelin wanted everything, in record time. And they were afraid of nothing. *Mothership*—the peak of their canon—is what No Fear sounds like.

The first four songs here, all

from *Led Zeppelin*, are the work of a new band racing against clock and budget to connect their individual histories and collective passions into a new, huge music. The roots are unmistakable, the combination unprecedented: the blues, twang, and holler of America's Deep South and black urban neighborhoods, especially anything bearing the classic Chess, Sun, and Atlantic labels; the British folk renaissance; California Day-Glo psychedelia.

So are the ambitions. "Good Times Bad Times" and "Communication Breakdown" are as tightly arranged as any candy-pop 45 Page and Jones played on as hired guns. But the details are explosive: Bonham's avalanche rolls and Jones' pummeling bass outbursts in "Good Times Bad Times"; the nuclear buckshot of Page's chords behind Plant's arcing wail in "Communication Breakdown," which takes off like a fuzz-rocket son of The Yardbirds' "Train Kept A-Rollin'" and still feels way too short at two minutes and change. "Babe I'm Gonna Leave You" was a folk ballad Page knew from Joan Baez's recording on her 1962 album, *Joan Baez In*



**JOHN PAUL JONES: BASS**

*Concert*. But there was nothing purist or polite about his *Led Zeppelin* arrangement: the echo-soaked mass of acoustic and electric guitars; Plant's white heat in the double-time break.

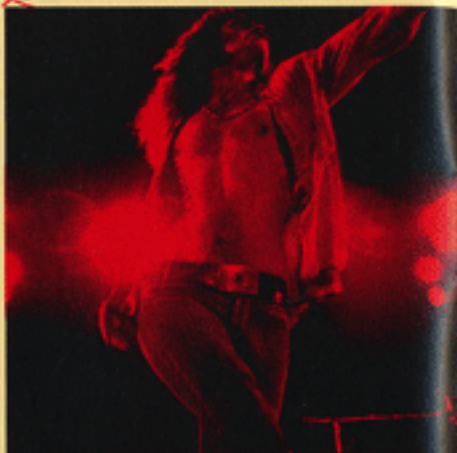
"I had a long ways to go with my voice then," Plant admitted to Crowe. "But at the same time, the enthusiasm and spark of working with Jimmy's guitar shows through quite well"—a telepathy imprinted in "Dazed And Confused," a song Page brought to Zeppelin from The Yardbirds' last tours. Here, Jones carries the riff, with Page's low-growl and soprano-fuzz guitars lined up behind him. But Plant and Page soon leap out front like warring twins: Plant mimicking Page's bowed-guitar moans; the two shrieking in tandem over Bonham and Jones' racing precision. Page and Plant's harmonized cries and call-response theater were as old as plantation field hollers and country-church hosannas. They were also a special, crucial excitement on Led Zeppelin's records, and you get it here, repeatedly, in a variety of settings: the immortal start of *Led Zeppelin II*, as Plant flies and dives through Page's guitar violence in the hurricane center of "Whole Lotta Love"; Plant's Viking yell against Page's rusted gallop in "Immigrant Song" on *Led Zeppelin III*; the searing vocal-guitar mantra, suspended in Himalayan-blizzard phasing, in "Nobody's Fault But Mine" on the 1976 album *Presence*; the sundown-prayer call of "In The Evening" on 1979's *In Through The Out Door*.

Page was modest when he talked about his guitar prowess with Crowe in 1975: "I'm not a guitarist as far as a technician goes—I just pick it up and play it. Technique doesn't come into it. I deal in emotions." That explains his crazed, slashing outbursts in "Whole Lotta Love" and "Heartbreaker" on *II* and the raw convulsion of his breaks in the slow blues "Since I've Been Loving You" on *III*. That last track was cut live in the studio—note the dark magic of Jones' Hammond-organ bed—and Page later dismissed his soloing: "It could have been better." Yet that spontaneous fury reflected Page's stubborn faith in the power of

"spontaneous combustion," as he once described the creation of the Little Richard-style dragster "Rock And Roll," even as Zeppelin's records became more eclectic and complex.

Page took no chances on Led Zeppelin's officially untitled fourth album (usually called *IV* or *Zoso* after one of the runes, representing each band member, on the inner sleeve). He spent nearly as much time mixing the eight tracks as the band did recording them, delaying the album's release for half a year. "When The Levee Breaks"—adapted by Zeppelin from a blues recorded by Kansas Joe McCoy and Memphis Minnie about the catastrophic Mississippi River flood of 1927—"is probably the most subtle thing on there," Page said in the *Trouser Press* interview. "Each twelve bars has something new about it . . . phased vocals, a backwards-echoed harmonica solo"—all nailed to your skull by one of the heaviest and, in the hip-hop age, most sampled drumbeats in rock.

"I don't want to sound that dictatorial, though," he insisted, "because



it's not that sort of thing at all. When we went into Headley Grange [an old almshouse in East Hampshire, England, where most of *IV* was recorded], it was more like 'Okay, what's anybody got?'" Jones, for example, had the volcanic-bebop riff that became "Black Dog."

Ironically, *IV*'s crowning track, "Stairway To Heaven," is so popular (to the point of backlash—you can get thrown out of guitar stores for playing the opening lick) that it is easy to miss why the song "crystallized the essence of the band," as Page said in 1975. "It had everything there and showed the band at its best—as a band, as a unit."

"It was a very successful song," Jones affirmed later, "successful in that everything worked well and fell into place."

"Stairway To Heaven" is a masterpiece of heavy rock 'n' roll scoring with a surprising moral center. (The opening lines, Plant said, were "a cynical aside about a woman getting everything she wanted all the time without giving back any thought or consideration.") The music literally ascends in distinct, melodic

episodes, from the magnetic quiet of Page's classic arpeggio and Jones' haunted recorder to the sudden shine of those 12-string chords and the total victory of Page's final solo. There may be no higher compliment to his perfectly articulated dynamite at the end of "Stairway To Heaven" than the cover version I saw Frank Zappa play at a New York show in 1988, complete with a ten-piece horn section that followed Page's solo note for note, in carefully scored harmony—a dramatic bow of respect from one guitar master to another.

With *IV*, Led Zeppelin's ascent was complete. There would be no bigger band in the '70s, in ticket sales (Zeppelin were filling U.S. football stadiums before The Rolling Stones), record sales (every album here went Top 10 in *Billboard*; all but two went to #1), and in off-stage excess (well-documented elsewhere). But restless adventuring had been an early theme in Plant's writing—in the Middle Earth geography of "Ramble On" on *II* and the snapshots of midnight sun and hot springs in "Immigrant Song," written after Zeppelin played in Reykjavik, Iceland, in June 1970.

To Plant, the essence and promise of Led Zeppelin was in "the quest, the travels and explorations that Page and I went on to far climes well off the beaten track," he told me in a 1988 interview: World domination obviously had its benefits. "I had a dream/Crazy dream/Anything I wanted to know, any place I needed to go," Plant crowed in "The Song Remains The Same" on 1973's *Houses Of The Holy*. Except it was no dream. By then, Bron-Yr-Aur, a remote cottage in southern Wales, was famous for the songs Page and Plant wrote there in 1970 and '71; Page and Plant had also recorded in India with members of the Bombay Symphony. "D'yer Mak'er" may have been tongue-in-cheek reggae (say the title real fast), but the blunt-instrument treble of Jones' bass was authentic homage to the truly heavy bottom and primitive fidelity of Jamaican records and rhythm sections. (Page often put Jones way up in Zeppelin mixes; in "Houses Of The Holy,"



**JIMMY PAGE: LEAD GUITAR**

originally cut for that album, the chugging bass is louder and dirtier than Page's guitar.)

"Of course, we only touched the surface," Plant said of those excursions with Page between records and tours. "We weren't anthropologists. But we were allowed, because we were musicians, to be invited in societies that people don't normally witness. It was quite a remarkable time, to open your eyes and see how Berber tribesmen lived in the northern Sahara—a memorable trip that inspired the thundering march and orchestral sandstorm of "Kashmir" on the 1975 double album *Physical Graffiti*.

Jones' skills as an orchestrator and multi-instrumentalist, rarely mentioned even in rave reviews of the band's records, were pivotal in Zeppelin's songs of pilgrimage (real and imagined). The mounting doom of "No Quarter" on *Houses Of The Holy* starts with the simple, compelling black-liquid ripple of his electric piano. In "Kashmir" staccato strings march alongside Page's climbing guitar, and long mellotron chords roll over the horizon like clouds of

dust. When I asked Plant, in 1988, about "Stairway To Heaven" and its status as the definitive Zeppelin song, he immediately corrected me. "It's not," he said. "'Kashmir' is."

Ultimately, everything here is definitive Zeppelin, in some way: the rude, thundering funk of "Trampled Under Foot," driven by Jones' percolating clavinet and Bonham's merciless drumming; the ferocious, prolonged assault of "Achilles Last Stand" (Page told Dave Schulps that he meticulously orchestrated the song's horde of guitars "in my mind," then recorded "all the overdubs in one night"); and the elegant sweep and memorial tenderness of "All My Love."

Then, suddenly, there was no Zeppelin. On September 25, 1980, a day after the group convened to rehearse for yet another North American tour, Bonham was found dead at Page's home, following a mammoth drinking binge. "The band didn't exist," Plant said later, "the minute Bonzo died."



**ROBERT PLANT: VOCALS**

The music and history were left unfinished. On December 4 Atlantic Records issued a one-sentence press release: "We wish it to be known that the loss of our dear friend and the deep respect we have for his family, together with the sense of undivided harmony felt by ourselves and our manager, have led us to decide that we could not continue as we were." It was simply signed "Led Zeppelin."

The end came with ironic timing—12 years almost to the day after Atlantic sent out that first announcement in 1968. It also sealed the purity and power of everything Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, and John Bonham wrote and played together in what now seems like a very short time. Led Zeppelin did not last long enough to fail. Instead, they have a unique, eternal life in this music that can never be tainted and will never be topped.

The band is gone. The thrill is not.

—David Fricke



## DISC ONE

### 1. GOOD TIMES BAD TIMES

(Jimmy Page/John Paul Jones/John Bonham)  
Recorded and mixed in October 1968 at Olympic Studios, London • Engineered by Glyn Johns • Originally released on January 12, 1969, on "LED ZEPPELIN" • Released as a single on 3/10/69

### 2. COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

(Jimmy Page/John Paul Jones/John Bonham)  
Recorded and mixed in October 1968 at Olympic Studios, London • Engineered by Glyn Johns • Originally released on January 12, 1969, on "LED ZEPPELIN" • Released as a single on 3/10/69

### 3. DAZED AND CONFUSED

(Jimmy Page)  
Recorded and mixed in October 1968 at Olympic Studios, London • Engineered by Glyn Johns • Originally released on January 12, 1969, on "LED ZEPPELIN"

### 4. BABE I'M GONNA LEAVE YOU

(Anne Bredon/Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)  
Recorded and mixed in October 1968 at Olympic Studios, London • Engineered by Glyn Johns • Originally released on January 12, 1969, on "LED ZEPPELIN"

### 5. WHOLE LOTTA LOVE

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham/Willie Dixon)  
Recorded in 1969 at Olympic Studios, London • Engineered by George Chkiantz • Mixed at A&R Studios, New York, with Eddie Kramer • Originally released on October 22, 1969, on "LED ZEPPELIN II" • Released as a single on 11/7/69

### 6. RAMBLE ON

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)  
Recorded in 1969 at Juggy Sound Studio, New York • Engineered by Eddie Kramer • Mixed at A&R Studios, New York, with Eddie Kramer • Originally released on October 22, 1969, on "LED ZEPPELIN II"

### 7. HEARTBREAKER

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham)  
Recorded in 1969 at A&R Studios, New York • Engineered by Eddie Kramer • Mixed at A&R Studios, New York, with Eddie Kramer • Originally released on October 22, 1969, on "LED ZEPPELIN II"

### 8. IMMIGRANT SONG

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)  
Recorded in 1970 at Headley Grange, Hampshire, with The Rolling Stones Mobile Studio • Engineered by Andy Johns • Mixed at Island Studios, London, with Andy Johns • Originally released on October 5, 1970, on "LED ZEPPELIN III" • Released as a single on 11/5/70

### 9. SINCE I'VE BEEN LOVING YOU

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones)  
Recorded in 1970 at Island Studios, London • Engineered by Andy Johns • Mixed at Island Studios, London, with Andy Johns • Originally released on October 5, 1970, on "LED ZEPPELIN III"

### 10. ROCK AND ROLL

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham)  
Recorded in 1971 at Headley Grange, Hampshire, with The Rolling Stones Mobile Studio • Engineered by Andy Johns • Mixed at Island Studios and Olympic Studios, London, with Andy Johns • Originally released on November 8, 1971, on the group's untitled fourth album • Released as a single on 2/21/72

### 11. BLACK DOG

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones)  
Recorded in 1971 at Headley Grange, Hampshire, with The Rolling Stones Mobile Studio • Engineered by Andy Johns • Mixed at Island Studios, London, with Andy Johns • Originally released on November 8, 1971, on the group's untitled fourth album • Released as a single on 12/2/71

### 12. WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham/Memphis Minnie)  
Recorded in 1971 at Headley Grange, Hampshire, with The Rolling Stones Mobile Studio • Engineered by Andy Johns • Mixed at Sunset Sound, Los Angeles, with Andy Johns • Originally released on November 8, 1971, on the group's untitled fourth album

### 13. STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)  
Recorded in 1971 at Island Studios, London • Engineered by Andy Johns • Mixed at Island Studios, London, with Andy Johns • Originally released on November 8, 1971, on the group's untitled fourth album

## DISC TWO

### 1. THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)  
Recorded in 1972 at Stargroves with The Rolling Stones Mobile Studio • Engineered by Eddie Kramer • Mixed at Olympic Studios, London, with Keith Harwood • Originally released on March 23, 1973, on "HOUSES OF THE HOLY"

### 2. OVER THE HILLS AND FAR AWAY

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)  
Recorded in 1972 at Stargroves with The Rolling Stones Mobile Studio • Engineered by Eddie Kramer • Mixed at Electric Lady, New York, with Eddie Kramer • Originally released on March 23, 1973, on "HOUSES OF THE HOLY" • Released as a single on 5/24/73

### 3. O'YER MAK'ER

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham)  
Recorded in 1972 at Stargroves with The Rolling Stones Mobile Studio • Engineered by Eddie Kramer • Mixed at Electric Lady, New York, with Eddie Kramer • Originally released on March 23, 1973, on "HOUSES OF THE HOLY" • Released as a single on 9/17/73

### 4. NO QUARTER

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones)  
Recorded in 1972 at Island Studios, London • Engineered by Andy Johns • Mixed at Olympic Studios, London, with Andy Johns • Originally released on March 23, 1973, on "HOUSES OF THE HOLY"

### 5. TRAMPLED UNDER FOOT

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones)  
Recorded in 1974 at Headley Grange, Hampshire, with Ronnie Lane's Mobile Studio and at Olympic Studios, London • Engineered by Ron Nevison (Mobile) and Keith Harwood (Olympic) • Mixed at Olympic Studios, London with Keith Harwood • Originally released on February 24, 1975, on "PHYSICAL GRAFFITI" • Released as a single on 4/2/75

### 6. HOUSES OF THE HOLY

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)  
Recorded in 1972 at Olympic Studios, London • Engineered by George Chkiantz • Mixed at Electric Lady, New York, with Eddie Kramer • Originally released on February 24, 1975, on "PHYSICAL GRAFFITI"



## 7. KASHMIR

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Bonham)

Recorded in 1974 at Headley Grange, Hampshire, with Ronnie Lane's Mobile Studio and at Olympic Studios, London • Engineered by Ron Nevison (Mobile) and Keith Harwood (Olympic) • Mixed at Olympic Studios, London, with Keith Harwood • Originally released on February 24, 1975, on "PHYSICAL GRAFFITI"

## 8. NOBODY'S FAULT BUT MINE

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)

Recorded and mixed in November/December 1975 at Musicland Studios, Munich • Engineered by Keith Harwood • Originally released on March 31, 1976, on "PRESENCE"

## 9. ACHILLES LAST STAND

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)

Recorded and mixed in November/December 1975 at Musicland Studios, Munich • Engineered by Keith Harwood • Originally released on March 31, 1976, on "PRESENCE"

## 10. IN THE EVENING

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones)

Recorded and mixed in November/December 1978 at Polar Studios, Stockholm • Mixed at Plumpion Studio • Engineered by Leif Mases • Originally released on August 15, 1979, on "IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR"

## 11. ALL MY LOVE

(Robert Plant/John Paul Jones)

Recorded and mixed in November/December 1978 at Polar Studios, Stockholm • Mixed at Plumpion Studio • Engineered by Leif Mases • Originally released on August 15, 1979, on "IN THROUGH THE OUT DOOR"

## DVD

EXCERPTS FROM **LED ZEPPELIN DVD**

### 1. WE'RE GONNA GROOVE

(Ben E. King/James Betha)

### 2. I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABE

(Willie Dixon)

### 3. DAZED AND CONFUSED (Part)

(Jimmy Page)

### 4. WHITE SUMMER (Part)

(Jimmy Page)

### 5. WHAT IS AND WHAT SHOULD NEVER BE

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)

### 6. MOBY DICK (Part)

(Jimmy Page/John Paul Jones/John Bonham)

### 7. WHOLE LOTTA LOVE

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham/Willie Dixon)

### 8. COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN

(Jimmy Page/John Paul Jones/John Bonham)

### 9. BRING IT ON HOME

(Willie Dixon)

### BRING IT ON BACK

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham)

### 10. IMMIGRANT SONG

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)

### 11. BLACK DOG

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones)

### 12. MISTY MOUNTAIN HOP

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones)

### 13. THE OCEAN

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones)

### 14. GOING TO CALIFORNIA

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)

### 15. IN MY TIME OF DYING

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham)

### 16. STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)

### 17. ROCK AND ROLL

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham)

### 18. NOBODY'S FAULT BUT MINE

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant)

### 19. KASHMIR

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Bonham)

### 20. WHOLE LOTTA LOVE

(Jimmy Page/Robert Plant/John Paul Jones/John Bonham/Willie Dixon)

## MOTHERSHIP

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Digi - Christian Rose/Dalle/Idols:

Back cover & performance photo;

Neal Preston: Jimmy Page; Carl Darr: John Paul Jones;

Diek Barnatt/Redferns: John Bonham;

Peter Simon: Robert Plant

Booklet - Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images: p. 2;

Charlie Gillett Archive/Redferns: p. 5; Carl Darr: p. 6;

Neal Preston: p. 8 (top), p. 9 (top), p. 12 & p. 19;

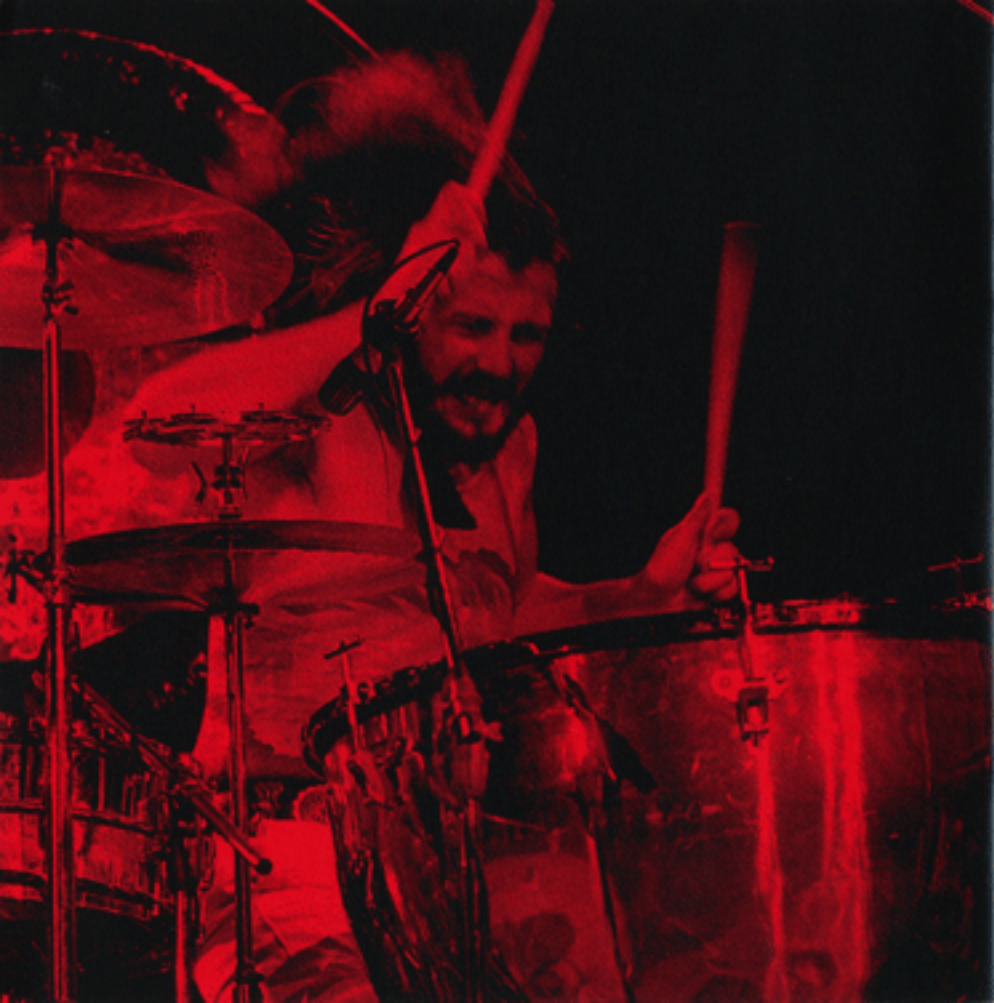
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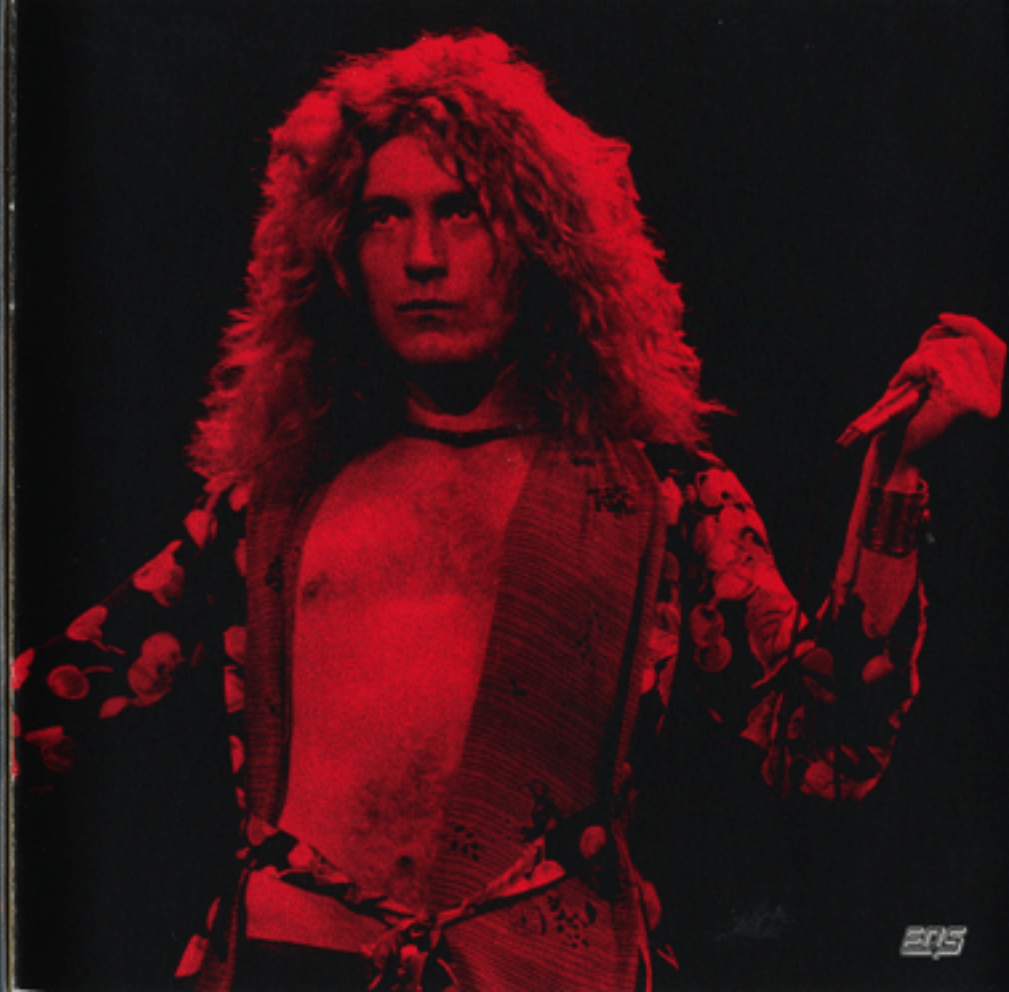
Ian Dickson/Redferns: p. 9 (bottom);

Laurens Van Houten: p. 11;

James Fortune/Idols: p. 18; Neil Zlozower: p. 20;

Bob Gruen: 21; Chris Walter/Photofeatures: p. 23





JOHN BONHAM  
JOHN PAUL JONES  
JIMMY PAGE  
ROBERT PLANT

