

= Led Zeppelin =

Led Zeppelin were an English rock band formed in London in 1968 . The group consisted of guitarist Jimmy Page , singer Robert Plant , bassist and keyboardist John Paul Jones , and drummer John Bonham . The band 's heavy , guitar @-@ driven sound , rooted in blues and psychedelia on their early albums , has earned them recognition as one of the progenitors of heavy metal , though their unique style drew from a wide variety of influences , including folk music .

After changing their name from the New Yardbirds , Led Zeppelin signed a deal with Atlantic Records that afforded them considerable artistic freedom . Although the group was initially unpopular with critics , they achieved significant commercial success with albums such as Led Zeppelin ( 1969 ) , Led Zeppelin II ( 1969 ) , Led Zeppelin III ( 1970 ) , Led Zeppelin IV ( 1971 ) , Houses of the Holy ( 1973 ) , and Physical Graffiti ( 1975 ) . Their fourth album , which features the track " Stairway to Heaven " , is among the most popular and influential works in rock music , and it helped to secure the group 's popularity .

Page wrote most of Led Zeppelin 's music , particularly early in their career , while Plant generally supplied the lyrics . Jones ' keyboard @-@ based compositions later became central to the group 's catalogue , which featured increasing experimentation . The latter half of their career saw a series of record @-@ breaking tours that earned the group a reputation for excess and debauchery . Although they remained commercially and critically successful , their output and touring schedule were limited during the late 1970s , and the group disbanded following Bonham 's death from alcohol @-@ related asphyxia in 1980 . In the decades that followed , the surviving members sporadically collaborated and participated in one @-@ off Led Zeppelin reunions . The most successful of these was the 2007 Ahmet Ertegun Tribute Concert in London , with Jason Bonham taking his late father 's place behind the drums .

Led Zeppelin are widely considered one of the most successful , innovative , and influential rock groups in history . They are one of the best @-@ selling music artists in the history of audio recording ; various sources estimate the group 's record sales at 200 to 300 million units worldwide . With RIAA @-@ certified sales of 111 @.@ 5 million units , they are the second @-@ best @-@ selling band in the United States . Each of their nine studio albums placed in the top 10 of the Billboard album chart and six reached the number @-@ one spot . Rolling Stone magazine described them as " the heaviest band of all time " , " the biggest band of the Seventies " , and " unquestionably one of the most enduring bands in rock history " . They were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995 ; the museum 's biography of the band states that they were " as influential " during the 1970s as the Beatles were during the 1960s .

= = History = =

= = = Formation = = =

In 1966 , London @-@ based session guitarist Jimmy Page joined the blues @-@ influenced rock band the Yardbirds to replace bassist Paul Samwell @-@ Smith . Page soon switched from bass to lead guitar , creating a dual lead guitar line @-@ up with Jeff Beck . Following Beck 's departure in October 1966 , the Yardbirds , tired from constant touring and recording , began to wind down . Page wanted to form a supergroup with him and Beck on guitars , and the Who 's Keith Moon and John Entwistle on drums and bass , respectively . Vocalists Steve Winwood and Steve Marriott were also considered for the project . The group never formed , although Page , Beck , and Moon did record a song together in 1966 , " Beck 's Bolero " , in a session that also included bassist @-@ keyboardist John Paul Jones .

The Yardbirds played their final gig in July 1968 at Luton College of Technology in Bedfordshire . They were still committed to several concerts in Scandinavia , so drummer Jim McCarty and vocalist Keith Relf authorised Page and bassist Chris Dreja to use " the Yardbirds " name to fulfill the band 's obligations . Page and Dreja began putting a new line @-@ up together . Page 's first choice for the

lead singer was Terry Reid , but Reid declined the offer and suggested Robert Plant , a singer for the Band of Joy and Hobbstweedle . Plant eventually accepted the position , recommending former Band of Joy drummer John Bonham . Jones inquired about the vacant position at the suggestion of his wife after Dreja dropped out of the project to become a photographer . Page had known Jones since they were both session musicians and agreed to let him join as the final member .

The four played together for the first time in a room below a record store on Gerrard Street in London . Page suggested that they attempt " Train Kept A @-@ Rollin ' " , originally a jump blues song popularised in a rockabilly version by Johnny Burnette , which had been covered by the Yardbirds . " As soon as I heard John Bonham play " , Jones recalled , " I knew this was going to be great ... We locked together as a team immediately " . Before leaving for Scandinavia , the group took part in a recording session for the P. J. Proby album , Three Week Hero . The album 's track " Jim 's Blues " , with Plant on harmonica , was the first studio track to feature all four future members of Led Zeppelin .

The band completed the Scandinavian tour as the New Yardbirds , playing together for the first time in front of a live audience at Gladsaxe Teen Clubs in Gladsaxe , Denmark , on 7 September 1968 . Later that month , they began recording their first album , which was based on their live set . The album was recorded and mixed in nine days , and Page covered the costs . After the album 's completion , the band were forced to change their name after Dreja issued a cease and desist letter , stating that Page was allowed to use the New Yardbirds moniker for the Scandinavian dates only . One account of how the new band 's name was chosen held that Moon and Entwistle had suggested that a supergroup with Page and Beck would go down like a " lead balloon " , an idiom for disastrous results . The group dropped the ' a ' in lead at the suggestion of their manager , Peter Grant , so that those unfamiliar with the term would not pronounce it " leed " . The word " balloon " was replaced by " zeppelin " , a word which , according to music journalist Keith Shadwick , brought " the perfect combination of heavy and light , combustibility and grace " to Page 's mind .

In November 1968 , Grant secured a \$ 143 @,@ 000 advance contract from Atlantic Records , which was then the biggest deal of its kind for a new band . Atlantic were a label with a catalogue of mainly blues , soul , and jazz artists , but in the late 1960s they began to take an interest in British progressive rock acts . Record executives signed Led Zeppelin without having ever seen them . Under the terms of their contract , the band had autonomy in deciding when they would release albums and tour , and had the final say over the contents and design of each album . They would also decide how to promote each release and which tracks to release as singles . They formed their own company , Superhype , to handle all publishing rights .

= = = Early years : 1968 ? 70 = = =

The band began their first tour of the UK on 4 October 1968 , they still were billed as the New Yardbirds , and played their first show as Led Zeppelin at the University of Surrey in Battersea on 25 October . Tour manager Richard Cole , who would become a major figure in the touring life of the group , organised their first North American tour at the end of the year . Their debut album , Led Zeppelin , was released in the US during the tour on 12 January 1969 , and peaked at number 10 on the Billboard chart ; it was released in the UK , where it peaked at number 6 , on 31 March . According to Steve Erlewine , the album 's memorable guitar riffs , lumbering rhythms , psychedelic blues , groovy , bluesy shuffles and hints of English folk , made it " a significant turning point in the evolution of hard rock and heavy metal " .

In their first year , Led Zeppelin completed four US and four UK concert tours , and also released their second album , Led Zeppelin II . Recorded mostly on the road at various North American studios , it was an even greater commercial success than their first album , and reached the number one chart position in the US and the UK . The album further developed the mostly blues @-@ rock musical style established on their debut release , creating a sound that was " heavy and hard , brutal and direct " , and which would be highly influential and frequently imitated . Steve Waksman has suggested that Led Zeppelin II was " the musical starting point for heavy metal " .

The band saw their albums as indivisible , complete listening experiences , disliking the re @-@

editing of existing tracks for release as singles . Grant maintained an aggressive pro @-@ album stance , particularly in the UK , where there were few radio and TV outlets for rock music . Without the band 's consent , however , some songs were released as singles , particularly in the US . In 1969 an edited version of " Whole Lotta Love " , a track from their second album , was released as a single in the US . It reached number four in the Billboard chart in January 1970 , selling over one million copies and helping to cement the band 's popularity . The group also increasingly shunned television appearances , citing their preference that their fans hear and see them in live concerts .

Following the release of their second album , Led Zeppelin completed several more US tours . They played initially in clubs and ballrooms , and then in larger auditoriums as their popularity grew . Some early Led Zeppelin concerts lasted more than four hours , with expanded and improvised live versions of their repertoire . Many of these shows have been preserved as bootleg recordings . It was during this period of intensive concert touring that the band developed a reputation for off @-@ stage excess .

In 1970 Page and Plant retired to Bron @-@ Yr @-@ Aur , a remote cottage in Wales , to commence work on their third album , Led Zeppelin III . The result was a more acoustic style that was strongly influenced by folk and Celtic music , and showcased the band 's versatility . The album 's rich acoustic sound initially received mixed reactions , with critics and fans surprised at the turn from the primarily electric arrangements of the first two albums , further fuelling the band 's hostility to the musical press . It reached number one in the UK and US charts , but its stay would be the shortest of their first five albums . The album 's opening track , " Immigrant Song " , was released as a US single in November 1970 against the band 's wishes , reaching the top twenty on the Billboard chart .

= = = " The Biggest Band in the World " : 1971 ? 75 = = =

During the 1970s , Led Zeppelin reached new heights of commercial and critical success that made them one of the most influential groups of the era , eclipsing their earlier achievements . The band 's image also changed as the members began to wear elaborate , flamboyant clothing . Led Zeppelin began travelling in a private jet airliner , a Boeing 720 ( nicknamed the Starship ) , rented out entire sections of hotels ( including the Continental Hyatt House in Los Angeles , known colloquially as the " Riot House " ) , and became the subject of frequently repeated stories of debauchery . One involved John Bonham riding a motorcycle through a rented floor of the Riot House , while another involved the destruction of a room in the Tokyo Hilton , leading to the group being banned from that establishment for life . Although Led Zeppelin developed a reputation for trashing their hotel suites and throwing television sets out of the windows , some suggest that these tales have been exaggerated . According to music journalist Chris Welch , " [ Led Zeppelin 's ] travels spawned many stories , but it was a myth that [ they ] were constantly engaged in acts of wanton destruction and lewd behaviour " .

Led Zeppelin released their fourth album on 8 November 1971 . In response to the treatment they had received from critics , particularly after Led Zeppelin III , the band decided to release the fourth album with no title , though it is variously referred to as Led Zeppelin IV , Untitled , IV , or , due to the four symbols appearing on the record label , as Four Symbols , Zoso or Runes . In addition to lacking a title , the original cover featured no band name , as the group wished to be anonymous and to avoid easy pigeonholing by the press . With 37 million copies sold , Led Zeppelin IV is one of the best @-@ selling albums in history , and its massive popularity cemented Led Zeppelin 's status as superstars in the 1970s . By 2006 , it had sold 23 million copies in the United States alone . The track " Stairway to Heaven " , never released as a single , is sometimes quoted as being the most requested and most played album @-@ oriented rock ( AOR ) FM radio song . The group followed up the album 's release with tours of the UK , Australasia , North America , Japan , and the UK again from late 1971 through early 1973 .

Led Zeppelin 's next album , Houses of the Holy , was released in March 1973 . It featured further experimentation by the band , who expanded their use of synthesisers and mellotron orchestration . The predominantly orange album cover , designed by the London @-@ based design group

Hipgnosis , depicts images of nude children climbing the Giant 's Causeway in Northern Ireland . Although the children are not shown from the front , the cover was controversial at the time of the album 's release . As with the band 's fourth album , neither their name nor the album title was printed on the sleeve .

Houses of the Holy topped charts worldwide , and the band 's subsequent concert tour of North America in 1973 broke records for attendance , as they consistently filled large auditoriums and stadiums . At Tampa Stadium in Florida , they played to 56 @, @ 800 fans , breaking the record set by the Beatles ' 1965 Shea Stadium concert and grossing \$ 309 @, @ 000 . Three sold @- @ out shows at Madison Square Garden in New York City were filmed for a motion picture , but the theatrical release of this project ( The Song Remains the Same ) was delayed until 1976 . Before the final night 's performance , \$ 180 @, @ 000 of the band 's money from gate receipts was stolen from a safe deposit box at the Drake Hotel .

In 1974 , Led Zeppelin took a break from touring and launched their own record label , Swan Song , named after an unreleased song . The record label 's logo , based on a drawing called Evening : Fall of Day ( 1869 ) by William Rimmer , features a picture of Apollo . The logo can be found on Led Zeppelin memorabilia , especially T @- @ shirts . In addition to using Swan Song as a vehicle to promote their own albums , the band expanded the label 's roster , signing artists such as Bad Company , the Pretty Things and Maggie Bell . The label was successful while Led Zeppelin existed , but folded less than three years after they disbanded .

In 1975 , Led Zeppelin 's double album Physical Graffiti was their first release on the Swan Song label . It consisted of fifteen songs , of which eight had been recorded at Headley Grange in 1974 and seven had been recorded earlier . A review in Rolling Stone magazine referred to Physical Graffiti as Led Zeppelin 's " bid for artistic respectability " , adding that the only bands Led Zeppelin had to compete with for the title " The World 's Best Rock Band " were the Rolling Stones and the Who . The album was a massive commercial and critical success . Shortly after the release of Physical Graffiti , all previous Led Zeppelin albums simultaneously re @- @ entered the top @- @ 200 album chart , and the band embarked on another North American tour , now employing sophisticated sound and lighting systems . In May 1975 , Led Zeppelin played five sold @- @ out nights at the Earls Court Arena in London , at the time the largest arena in Britain .

= = = Hiatus from touring and return : 1975 ? 77 = = =

Following their triumphant Earls Court appearances , Led Zeppelin took a holiday and planned an autumn tour in America , scheduled to open with two outdoor dates in San Francisco . In August 1975 , however , Plant and his wife Maureen were involved in a serious car crash while on holiday in Rhodes , Greece . Plant suffered a broken ankle and Maureen was badly injured ; a blood transfusion saved her life . Unable to tour , he headed to the Channel Island of Jersey to spend August and September recuperating , with Bonham and Page in tow . The band then reconvened in Malibu , California . During this forced hiatus much of the material for their next album , Presence , was written .

By this time , Led Zeppelin were the world 's number one rock attraction , having outsold most bands of the time , including the Rolling Stones . Presence , released in March 1976 , marked a change in the Led Zeppelin sound towards more straightforward , guitar @- @ based jams , departing from the acoustic ballads and intricate arrangements featured on their previous albums . Though it was a platinum seller , Presence received a mixed reaction among fans and the music press , with some critics suggesting that the band 's excesses may have caught up with them . Page had begun using heroin during recording sessions for the album , a habit which may have affected the band 's later live shows and studio recordings , although this has been denied by Page .

Because of Plant 's injuries , Led Zeppelin did not tour in 1976 . Instead , the band completed the concert film The Song Remains the Same and the accompanying soundtrack album . The film premiered in New York City on 20 October 1976 , but was given a lukewarm reception by critics and fans . The film was particularly unsuccessful in the UK , where , unwilling to tour since 1975 because of their tax exile status , Led Zeppelin faced an uphill battle to recapture the public 's affection .

In 1977 , Led Zeppelin embarked on another major concert tour of North America . The band set another attendance record , with an audience of 76 @, @ 229 at their Silverdome concert on 30 April . It was , according to the Guinness Book of Records , the largest attendance to that date for a single act show . Although the tour was financially profitable , it was beset by off @-@ stage problems . On 19 April , over 70 people were arrested as about 1 @, @ 000 fans tried to gatecrash Cincinnati Riverfront Coliseum for two sold @-@ out concerts , while others tried to gain entry by throwing rocks and bottles through glass doors . On 3 June , a concert at Tampa Stadium was cut short because of a severe thunderstorm , despite tickets indicating " Rain or Shine " . A riot broke out , resulting in arrests and injuries .

After the 23 July show at the Day on the Green festival at the Oakland Coliseum in Oakland , California , Bonham and members of Led Zeppelin 's support staff were arrested after a member of promoter Bill Graham 's staff was badly beaten during the band 's performance . The following day 's second Oakland concert was the group 's final live appearance in the United States . Two days later , as they checked in at a French Quarter hotel for their 30 July performance at the Louisiana Superdome , Plant received news that his five @-@ year @-@ old son , Karac , had died from a stomach virus . The rest of the tour was immediately cancelled , prompting widespread speculation about Led Zeppelin 's future .

= = = Bonham 's death and break @-@ up : 1978 ? 80 = = =

In November 1978 the group recorded at Polar Studios in Stockholm , Sweden . The resulting album , In Through the Out Door , featured sonic experimentation that again drew mixed reactions from critics . Nevertheless , the album reached number one in the UK and the US in just its second week of release . With this album 's release , Led Zeppelin 's entire catalogue returned to the Billboard Top 200 in the weeks of 27 October and 3 November 1979 .

In August 1979 , after two warm @-@ up shows in Copenhagen , Led Zeppelin headlined two concerts at the Knebworth Music Festival , playing to a crowd of approximately 104 @, @ 000 on the first night . A brief , low @-@ key European tour was undertaken in June and July 1980 , featuring a stripped @-@ down set without the usual lengthy jams and solos . On 27 June , at a show in Nuremberg , Germany , the concert came to an abrupt halt in the middle of the third song , when Bonham collapsed onstage and was rushed to hospital . Speculation in the press suggested that his collapse had been the result of excessive alcohol and drug use , but the band claimed that he had simply overeaten .

A North American tour , the band 's first since 1977 , was scheduled to commence on 17 October 1980 . On 24 September , Bonham was picked up by Led Zeppelin assistant Rex King to attend rehearsals at Bray Studios . During the journey , Bonham asked to stop for breakfast , where he downed four quadruple vodkas ( between 16 and 24 oz . ) , with a ham roll . After taking a bite of the ham roll he said to his assistant , " breakfast " . He continued to drink heavily after arriving at the studio . The rehearsals were halted late that evening and the band retired to Page 's house ? the Old Mill House in Clewer , Windsor . After midnight , Bonham , who had fallen asleep , was taken to bed and placed on his side . At 1 : 45 pm the next day , Benji LeFevre ( Led Zeppelin 's new tour manager ) and John Paul Jones found Bonham dead . The cause of death was asphyxiation from vomit ; an autopsy found no other drugs in his body . Bonham was cremated on 10 October 1980 , and his ashes were buried in the graveyard of St Michael 's Church in Rushock near Droitwich , Worcestershire . A verdict of accidental death was returned at an inquest held on 27 October .

The planned North American tour was cancelled , and despite rumours that Cozy Powell , Carmine Appice , Barriemore Barlow , Simon Kirke , or Bev Bevan would join the group as his replacement , the remaining members decided to disband . A 4 December 1980 press statement stated that , " We wish it to be known that the loss of our dear friend , and the deep sense of undivided harmony felt by ourselves and our manager , have led us to decide that we could not continue as we were " . The statement was signed simply " Led Zeppelin " .

= = = Post @-@ breakup = = =

===== 1980s =====

Following Zeppelin 's dissolution , the first significant project for the members was the Honeydrippers , which Plant initially formed in 1981 , and which released its only album in 1984 . The group featured Page on lead guitar , along with studio musicians and friends of the pair , including Jeff Beck , Paul Shaffer , and Nile Rodgers . Plant focused on a different direction from Zeppelin , playing standards and in a more R & B style , highlighted by a cover of " Sea of Love " that peaked at number three on the Billboard chart in early 1985 .

Coda ? a collection of Zeppelin outtakes and unused tracks ? was issued in November 1982 . It included two tracks from the Royal Albert Hall in 1970 , one each from the Led Zeppelin III and Houses of the Holy sessions , and three from the In Through the Out Door sessions . It also featured a 1976 Bonham drum instrumental with electronic effects added by Page , called " Bonzo 's Montreux " .

On 13 July 1985 , Page , Plant , and Jones reunited for the Live Aid concert at JFK Stadium , Philadelphia , playing a short set featuring drummers Tony Thompson and Phil Collins , and bassist Paul Martinez . Collins had contributed to Plant 's first two solo albums while Martinez was a member of Plant 's solo band . The performance was marred by a lack of rehearsal with the two drummers , Page 's struggles with an out @-@ of @-@ tune guitar , poorly functioning monitors , and Plant 's hoarse voice . Page described the performance as " pretty shambolic " , while Plant characterised it as an " atrocity " .

The three members reunited again on 14 May 1988 , for the Atlantic Records 40th Anniversary concert , with Bonham 's son Jason on drums . The result was again disjointed : Plant and Page had argued immediately prior to taking the stage about whether to play " Stairway to Heaven " , Jones ' keyboards were absent from the live television feed . Page described the performance as " one big disappointment " and Plant said " the gig was foul " .

===== 1990s =====

The first Led Zeppelin box set , featuring tracks remastered under Page 's supervision , was released in 1990 and bolstered the band 's reputation , leading to abortive discussions among members about a reunion . This set included four previously unreleased tracks , including a version of Robert Johnson 's " Travelling Riverside Blues " . The song peaked at number seven on the Billboard Album Rock Tracks chart . 1992 saw the release of the " Immigrant Song " / " Hey , Hey , What Can I Do " ( the original B @-@ side ) as a CD single in the US . Led Zeppelin Boxed Set 2 was released in 1993 ; the two box sets together containing all known studio recordings , as well as some rare live tracks .

In 1994 , Page and Plant reunited for a 90 @-@ minute " UnLedded " MTV project . They later released an album called No Quarter : Jimmy Page and Robert Plant UnLedded , which featured some reworked Led Zeppelin songs , and embarked on a world tour the following year . This is said to be the beginning of a rift between the band members , as Jones was not even told of the reunion .

In 1995 , Led Zeppelin were inducted into the United States Rock and Roll Hall of Fame by Steven Tyler and Joe Perry of Aerosmith . Jason and Zoë Bonham also attended , representing their late father . At the induction ceremony , the band 's inner rift became apparent when Jones joked upon accepting his award , " Thank you , my friends , for finally remembering my phone number " , causing consternation and awkward looks from Page and Plant . Afterwards , they played one brief set with Tyler and Perry , with Jason Bonham on drums , and then a second with Neil Young , this time with Michael Lee playing the drums .

In 1997 , Atlantic released a single edit of " Whole Lotta Love " in the US and the UK , the only single the band released in their homeland , where it peaked at number 21 . November 1997 saw the release of Led Zeppelin BBC Sessions , a two @-@ disc set largely recorded in 1969 and 1971 .

Page and Plant released another album called *Walking into Clarksdale* in 1998 , featuring all new material , but after disappointing sales the partnership dissolved before a planned Australian tour .

== 2000s and beyond ==

2003 saw the release of the triple live album *How the West Was Won* , and *Led Zeppelin DVD* , a six @-@ hour chronological set of live footage that became the best @-@ selling music DVD in history . In July 2007 Atlantic / Rhino and Warner Home Video announced three new *Led Zeppelin* titles to be released that November . First was *Mothership* , a 24 @-@ track best @-@ of spanning the band 's career , followed by a reissue of the soundtrack *The Song Remains the Same* , which included previously unreleased material , and a new DVD . *Led Zeppelin* also made their catalogue legally available for digital download , becoming one of the last major rock bands to do so .

On 10 December 2007 , *Led Zeppelin* reunited for the Ahmet Ertegun Tribute Concert at the O2 Arena in London , with Jason Bonham again taking his late father 's place on drums . According to Guinness World Records 2009 , *Led Zeppelin* set the world record for the " Highest Demand for Tickets for One Music Concert " as 20 million requests for the reunion show were rendered online . Music critics praised the band 's performance and there was widespread speculation about a full reunion . Page , Jones and Jason Bonham were reported to be willing to tour , and to be working on material for a new *Led Zeppelin* project . Plant continued his touring commitments with Alison Krauss , stating in September 2008 that he would not be recording or touring with the band . Jones and Page reportedly looked for a replacement for Plant , considering singers including Steven Tyler from *Aerosmith* , and Myles Kennedy of *Alter Bridge* , but in January 2009 it was confirmed that the project had been abandoned . A film of the O2 performance , *Celebration Day* , premiered on 17 October 2012 and was released on home video on 19 November . The film grossed \$ 2 million in one night , and the live album peaked at number 4 and 9 in the UK and US , respectively . Following the film 's premiere , Page revealed that he had been remastering the band 's discography with the first three albums re @-@ released on 2 June 2014 , containing bonus tracks .

== Musical style ==

*Led Zeppelin* 's music was rooted in the blues . The influence of American blues artists such as Muddy Waters and Skip James was particularly apparent on their first two albums , as was the distinct country blues style of *Howlin ' Wolf* . Tracks were structured around the twelve @-@ bar blues on every studio album except for one , and the blues directly and indirectly influenced other songs both musically and lyrically . The band were also strongly influenced by the music of the British , Celtic , and American folk revivals . Scottish folk guitarist Bert Jansch helped inspire Page , and from him he adapted open tunings and aggressive strokes into his playing . The band also drew on a wide variety of genres , including world music , and elements of early rock and roll , jazz , country , funk , soul , and reggae , particularly on *Houses of the Holy* and the albums that followed .

The material on the first two albums was largely constructed out of extended jams of blues standards and folk songs . This method led to the mixing of musical and lyrical elements of different songs and versions , as well as improvised passages , to create new material , but would lead to later accusations of plagiarism and legal disputes over copyright . Usually the music was developed first , sometimes with improvised lyrics that might then be rewritten for the final version of the song . From the visit to Bron @-@ Yr @-@ Aur in 1970 , the songwriting partnership between Page and Plant became predominant , with Page supplying the music , largely via his acoustic guitar , and Plant emerging as the band 's chief lyricist . Jones and Bonham then added to the material , in rehearsal or in the studio , as a song was developed . In the later stages of the band 's career , Page took a back seat in composition and Jones became increasingly important in producing music , often composed on the keyboard . Plant would then add lyrics before Page and Bonham developed their parts .

Early lyrics drew on the band 's blues and folk roots , often mixing lyrical fragments from different songs . Many of the band 's songs dealt with themes of romance , unrequited love and sexual

conquest , which were common in rock , pop and blues music . Some of their lyrics , especially those derived from the blues , have been interpreted as misogynistic . Particularly on Led Zeppelin III , they incorporated elements of mythology and mysticism into their music , which largely grew out of Plant 's interest in legends and history . These elements were often taken to reflect Page 's interest in the occult , which resulted in accusations that the recordings contained subliminal satanic messages , some of which were said to be contained in backmasking ; these claims were generally dismissed by the band and music critics . Susan Fast argues that as Plant emerged as the band 's main lyricist , the songs more obviously reflected his alignment with the West Coast counterculture of the 1960s . In the later part of the band 's career Plant 's lyrics became more autobiographical , and less optimistic , drawing on his own experiences and circumstances .

According to musicologist Robert Walser , " Led Zeppelin 's sound was marked by speed and power , unusual rhythmic patterns , contrasting terraced dynamics , singer Robert Plant 's wailing vocals , and guitarist Jimmy Page 's heavily distorted crunch " . These elements mean that they are often cited as one of the progenitors of hard rock and heavy metal and they have been described as the " definitive heavy metal band " , although the band members have often eschewed the label . Part of this reputation depends on the band 's use of distorted guitar riffs on songs like " Whole Lotta Love " and " The Wanton Song " . Often riffs were not doubled by guitar , bass and drums exactly , but instead there were melodic or rhythmic variations ; as in " Black Dog " , where three different time signatures are used . Page 's guitar playing incorporated elements of the blues scale with those of eastern music . Plant 's use of high @-@ pitched shrieks has been compared to Janis Joplin 's vocal technique . Bonham 's drumming was noted for its power , his rapid rolls and his fast beats on a single bass drum . Jones ' basslines have been described as melodic and his keyboard playing added a classical touch to the band 's sound .

Page stated that he wanted Led Zeppelin to produce music that had " light and shade " . This began to be more clearly realised beginning with Led Zeppelin III , which made greater use of acoustic instruments . This approach has been seen as exemplified in the fourth album , particularly on " Stairway to Heaven " , which begins with acoustic guitar and recorder and ends with drums and heavy electric sounds . Towards the end of their recording career , they moved to a more mellow and progressive sound , dominated by Jones ' keyboard motifs . They also increasingly made use of various layering and production techniques , including multi @-@ tracking and overdubbed guitar parts . Their emphasis on the sense of dynamics and ensemble arrangement has been seen as producing an individualistic style that transcends any single music genre . Ian Peddie argues that they were " ... loud , powerful and often heavy , but their music was also humorous , self @-@ reflective and extremely subtle " .

= = Legacy = =

Led Zeppelin are widely considered to be one of the most successful , innovative , and influential bands in the history of rock music . Rock critic Mikal Gilmore said , " Led Zeppelin ? talented , complex , grasping , beautiful and dangerous ? made one of the most enduring bodies of composition and performance in twentieth @-@ century music , despite everything they had to overpower , including themselves " .

Led Zeppelin have influenced hard rock and heavy metal bands such as Deep Purple , Black Sabbath , Rush , Queen , Aerosmith , the Black Crowes , and Megadeth as well as progressive metal bands like Tool and Dream Theater . They influenced some early punk and post @-@ punk bands , among them the Ramones and the Cult . They were also an important influence on the development of alternative rock , as bands adapted elements from the " Zeppelin sound " of the mid @-@ 1970s , including the Smashing Pumpkins , Nirvana , Pearl Jam , Soundgarden , Bands and artists from diverse genres have acknowledged the influence of Led Zeppelin , such as Madonna , Shakira , Lady Gaga , and Katie Melua .

Led Zeppelin have been credited with a major impact on the nature of the music business , particularly in the development of album @-@ orientated rock ( AOR ) and stadium rock . In 1988 John Kalodner , then @-@ A & R executive of Geffen Records , remarked that " In my opinion , next



to the Beatles they 're the most influential band in history . They influence the way music is on records , AOR radio , concerts . They set the standards for the AOR @-@ radio format with ' Stairway to Heaven , ' having AOR hits without necessarily having Top 40 hits . They 're the ones who did the first real big arena concert shows , consistently selling out and playing stadiums without support . People can do as well as them , but nobody surpasses them " . Andrew Loog Oldham , the former producer and manager of the Rolling Stones , commented on how Led Zeppelin had a major influence on the record business , and the way rock concerts were managed and presented to huge audiences .

The band have sold over 200 million albums worldwide according to some sources , while others state that they have sold in excess of 300 million records , including 111 @.@ 5 million certified units in the United States . According to the Recording Industry Association of America , Led Zeppelin are the second @-@ highest @-@ selling band , the fourth highest selling music act in the US , and one of only three acts to earn four or more Diamond albums . Led Zeppelin remain one of the most bootlegged artists in the history of rock music .

Led Zeppelin also made a significant cultural impact . Jim Miller , editor of Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll , argues that " on one level , Led Zeppelin represents the final flowering of the sixties ' psychedelic ethic , which casts rock as passive sensory involvement " . Led Zeppelin have also been described as " the quintessential purveyors " of masculine and aggressive " cock rock " , although this assertion has been challenged . The band 's fashion @-@ sense has been seminal ; Simeon Lipman , head of pop culture at Christie 's auction house , has commented that " Led Zeppelin have had a big influence on fashion because the whole aura surrounding them is so cool , and people want a piece of that " . Led Zeppelin laid the foundation for the big hair of 1980s glam metal bands such as Mötley Crüe and Skid Row . Other musicians have also adapted elements from Led Zeppelin 's attitude to clothes , jewellery and hair , such as the hipster flares and tight band T @-@ shirts of Kings of Leon , shaggy hair , clingy T @-@ shirts and bluesman hair of Jack White of the White Stripes , and Kasabian guitarist Sergio Pizzorno 's silk scarves , trilbies and side @-@ laced tight jeans .

= = Awards and accolades = =

Led Zeppelin have collected many honours and awards throughout the course of their career . They were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995 , and the UK Music Hall of Fame in 2006 . Among the band 's awards are an American Music Award in 2005 , and the Polar Music Prize in 2006 . Led Zeppelin were the recipient of a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2005 , and four of their recordings have been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame . They have been awarded five Diamond albums , as well as fourteen Multi @-@ Platinum , four Platinum and one Gold album in the United States , while in the UK they have five Multi @-@ Platinum , six Platinum , one Gold and four Silver albums . In addition to listing five of their albums among " the 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " , Rolling Stone named Led Zeppelin the 14th @-@ greatest artist of all time in 2004 .

In 2005 , Page was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in recognition of his charity work , and in 2009 Plant was honoured as a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for his services to popular music . The band are ranked number one on VH1 's 100 Greatest Artists of Hard Rock and Classic Rock 's " 50 best live acts of all time " . They were named as the best Rock band in a poll by BBC Radio 2 . They were awarded an Ivor Novello Award for " Outstanding Contribution to British Music " in 1977 , as well as a " Lifetime Achievement Award " at the 42nd Annual Ivor Novello awards ceremony in 1997 . The band were honoured at the 2008 MOJO Awards with the " Best Live Act " prize for their one @-@ off reunion , and were described as the " greatest rock and roll band of all time " . The three surviving members ( Page , Plant , and Jones ) were named as 2012 recipients of Kennedy Center Honors .

= = Discography = =

= = Members = =

#### Band members

Jimmy Page ? guitar ( 1968 ? 80 ; 1985 , 1988 , 1995 , 2007 )

Robert Plant ? lead vocals ( 1968 ? 80 ; 1985 , 1988 , 1995 , 2007 )

John Paul Jones ? bass guitar , keyboards ( 1968 ? 80 ; 1985 , 1988 , 1995 , 2007 )

John Bonham ? drums ( 1968 ? 80 )

#### Live performance guests

Tony Thompson ? drums ( 1985 )

Phil Collins ? drums ( 1985 )

Paul Martinez ? bass ( 1985 )

Jason Bonham ? drums ( 1988 , 1995 , 2007 )

Michael Lee ? drums ( 1995 )