

= Led Zeppelin II =

Led Zeppelin II is the second studio album by the English rock band Led Zeppelin , released on 22 October 1969 in the United States and on 31 October 1969 in the United Kingdom on Atlantic Records . Recording sessions for the album took place at several locations in the United Kingdom and North America from January to August 1969 . Production was credited to lead guitarist and songwriter Jimmy Page , while it also served as Led Zeppelin 's first album to utilise the recording techniques of engineer Eddie Kramer . With elements of blues and folk music , Led Zeppelin II also exhibits the band 's evolving musical style of blues @-@ derived material and their guitar and riff @-@ based sound . It has been described as the band 's heaviest album .

Upon release , Led Zeppelin II sold well and was the band 's first album to reach number one in the UK and the US . In 1970 , art director David Juniper was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Recording Package for the album . On 15 November 1999 , it was certified 12 x Platinum by the RIAA for sales in excess of 12 million copies . Since its release , writers and music critics have regularly cited it in polls of the greatest and most influential rock albums .

= = Conception = =

= = = Background = = =

Led Zeppelin II was conceived during a hectic and much @-@ travelled period of Led Zeppelin 's career from January through August 1969 , when they completed four European and three American concert tours . Each song was separately recorded , mixed and produced at various studios in the UK and North America . The album was written on tour , during periods of a couple of hours in between concerts , a studio was booked and the recording process begun , resulting in a sound with spontaneity and urgency through necessity . Bassist John Paul Jones recalled that " We were touring a lot . Jimmy [Page] ' s riffs were coming fast and furious . A lot of them came from onstage especially during the long improvised section of ' Dazed and Confused ' . We 'd remember the good stuff and dart into a studio along the way . "

Some of the recording studios used by the band were not the most advanced . One studio in Vancouver , credited as " a hut " , had an 8 @-@ track set up that did not even have proper headphone facilities . The group 's lead singer Robert Plant later discussed the writing and recording process , stating " It was crazy really . We were writing the numbers in hotel rooms and then we 'd do a rhythm track in London , add the vocal in New York , overdub the harmonica in Vancouver and then come back to finish mixing at New York . "

" Thank You " , " The Lemon Song " and " Moby Dick " were overdubbed during the tour , while the mixing of " Whole Lotta Love " and " Heartbreaker " was also done on tour . Page later stated " In other words , some of the material came out of rehearsing for the next tour and getting new material together . "

= = = Recording = = =

Recording sessions for the album took place at Olympic and Morgan Studios in London , England ; A & M , Quantum , Sunset , Mirror Sound and Mystic Studios in Los Angeles , California ; Ardent Studios in Memphis , Tennessee ; A & R , Juggy Sound , Groove and Mayfair Studios in New York City ; and the " hut " in Vancouver . Production was entirely credited to Jimmy Page , while it also served as Led Zeppelin 's first album to utilise the skills and recording techniques of engineer Eddie Kramer . Led Zeppelin archivist Dave Lewis wrote of the album 's production , stating " That the album turned out to be such a triumph , in particular for a production quality that still sounds fresh today , was in no small way due to the successful alliance with Page and Kramer in the control room . " This partnership was particularly exhibited in the central section of the track " Whole Lotta Love " . Kramer later said , " The famous Whole Lotta Love mix , where everything is going bananas , is a

combination of Jimmy and myself just flying around on a small console twiddling every knob known to man . "

In another interview , Kramer later gave great credit to Page for the sound that was achieved , despite the inconsistent conditions in which it was recorded : " We did that album piece @-@ meal . We cut some of the tracks in some of the most bizarre studios you can imagine , little holes in the wall . Cheap studios . But in the end it sounded bloody marvellous . There was a unification of sound on [Led] Zeppelin II because there was one guy in charge and that was Mr. Page . " Page and Kramer spent two days mixing the album at A & R Studios .

One other song from the sessions , " La La " was included on the 2014 deluxe edition of the album .

= = Composition = =

The finished tracks reflect the raw , evolving sound of the band and their ability as live performers . The album has been noted for featuring a further development of the lyrical themes established by Jimmy Page on Led Zeppelin 's debut album , as Robert Plant had not until that point written any lyrics for the band . This all served to create a work which would then become more widely acclaimed and arguably more influential . " Whole Lotta Love " and " The Lemon Song " both feature sexual themes , as the latter contains a metaphor , which , according to one music writer , implores " unnamed ladies to squeeze his lemon ' til the juice runs down my leg . ' " As was later observed by Plant himself :

Led Zep II was very virile . That was the album that was going to dictate whether or not we had the staying power and the capacity to stimulate . It was still blues @-@ based but it was a much more carnal approach to the music and quite flamboyant . It was created on the run between hotel rooms and the GTOs , and that was quite something .

Led Zeppelin II also features experimentation with other musical styles and approaches , as on the alternately soft @-@ and @-@ loud " What Is and What Should Never Be " and " Ramble On " (which featured Page 's acoustic guitar) , or the pop @-@ influenced ballad " Thank You " . With its mysterious atmospherics , " Ramble On " helped develop hard rock 's association with fantasy themes , which had been partly derived from the psychedelic rock genre of two to three years before , but also from Plant 's personal interest in the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien . This musical direction would later culminate on Led Zeppelin IV (and countless subsequent groups would later carry the influence to further extremes) . Conversely , the instrumental " Moby Dick " features an extended drum solo by John Bonham , which would be extended further during Led Zeppelin concert performances sometimes for as long as half an hour .

Page 's contribution to this album was significant , as his electric guitar solo on the song " Heartbreaker " was emulated by many younger rock guitarists , and exemplifies the group 's intense musical attack . Led Zeppelin II is the band 's first album to feature Page playing a 1959 Gibson Les Paul , the electric guitar he helped popularise . His innovative recording and drum miking effects on tracks such as " Ramble On " and " Whole Lotta Love " also demonstrated his considerable skill , resourcefulness and originality as a producer . Rolling Stone magazine later called Page 's guitar riff for the latter song " one of the most exhilarating guitar riffs in rock & roll . " John Paul Jones later discussed Page 's contributions :

Jimmy started coming into his own as a producer around " Whole Lotta Love " . The backwards echo stuff . A lot of the microphone techniques were just inspired . Everybody thinks he goes into the studio with huge walls of amps , but he doesn 't . He uses a really small amp and he just mic 's it up really well , so it fits into a sonic picture .

The album 's material also marked a certain honing of Plant 's vocal approach , and signalled his emergence as a serious songwriter . Plant 's name had previously been absent from the songwriting credits of the band 's first album due to the previous contractual commitments that resulted from his earlier association with CBS Records as a solo artist . His influence on tracks such as " What Is and What Should Never Be " and " Ramble On " were pointers to the band 's musical future . Plant has commented that it was only during the sessions for Led Zeppelin II that he started to feel at home as

a vocalist in the studio with Led Zeppelin . In a 2008 interview for Uncut , he stated " [D] uring Led Zep I (1969) as far as I was concerned , I thought that I was going to [leave the band] anyway . I didn 't feel that comfortable because there were a lot of demands on me vocally ? which there were all the way through the Zeppelin thing . And I was quite nervous and didn 't really get into enjoying it until II . "

= = Packaging = =

The album sleeve design was from a poster by David Juniper , who was simply told by the band to come up with an interesting idea . Juniper was a fellow student of Page 's at Sutton Art College in Surrey . His design was based on a photograph of the Jagdstaffel 11 Division of the German Air Force during World War I , the famed Flying Circus led by the Red Baron . After the picture was tinted , the faces of the four members of the band were airbrushed on from a 1969 publicity photograph . Other faces added , according to Juniper , were either Miles Davis or Blind Willie Johnson , a friend of Andy Warhol (possibly Mary Woronov) and astronaut Neil Armstrong , although it is actually fellow astronaut Frank Borman . The cover also pictured the outline of a Zeppelin on a brown background (similar to the cover of the band 's first album) , which gave the album its nickname " Brown Bomber " .

= = Release and reception = =

The album was released on 22 October 1969 on Atlantic Records , with advance orders of 400 @ , @ 000 copies . The advertising campaign was built around the slogans ' Led Zeppelin - The Only Way to Fly ' and ' Led Zeppelin II Now Flying ' . Commercially , Led Zeppelin II was the band 's first album to hit No. 1 in the US , knocking The Beatles ' Abbey Road (1969) twice from the top spot , where it remained for seven weeks . By April 1970 it had registered three million American sales , whilst in Britain it enjoyed a 138 @ - @ week residence on the LP chart , climbing to the top spot in February 1970 .

The album also yielded Led Zeppelin 's biggest hit with the track " Whole Lotta Love " . This song reached No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100 in January 1970 , after Atlantic went against the group 's wishes by releasing a shorter version on 45 . The single 's B @ - @ side , " Living Loving Maid (She 's Just a Woman) " , also hit the Billboard chart , peaking at No. 65 in April 1970 . The album helped establish Led Zeppelin as an international concert attraction , as for the next year , the group continued to tour relentlessly , initially performing in clubs and ballrooms , then in larger auditoriums and eventually stadiums as their popularity grew .

In 1970 art director David Juniper was nominated for a Grammy Award in the category of best album package for Led Zeppelin II . On 10 November 1969 , the album was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America and in 1990 it was certified 5x platinum reflecting shipping of five million copies . By 14 November 1999 , Led Zeppelin II had shipped twelve million copies and was certified 12x platinum by the RIAA . The 2014 reissue of the album helped itself get back into the Billboard Top 10 when it got to # 9 .

= = Legacy = =

Led Zeppelin II has been cited by music writers as a blueprint for heavy metal bands that followed it . Blues @ - @ derived songs like " Whole Lotta Love " , " Heartbreaker " , " The Lemon Song " , " Moby Dick " , and " Bring It On Home " have been seen as representing standards of the genre , where the guitar @ - @ based riff (rather than vocal chorus or verses) defines the song and provides the key hook . Such arrangements and emphasis were at the time atypical in popular music . Page 's guitar solo in " Heartbreaker " featuring rapid @ - @ fire runs of notes tapped only by the left hand , was a major inspiration to the later work of metal soloists and " shredders " such as Eddie Van Halen and Steve Vai . As such , the album is generally considered to be very influential on the development of rock music , being an early forerunner of heavy metal , and inspiring a host of other

rock bands including Aerosmith , Iron Maiden and Guns N ' Roses .

Since its initial critical reception , Led Zeppelin II has been acknowledged by many critics and music writers as one of the most influential albums of rock music , and has earned several accolades from music publications , frequently placed at or near the top of " best album " lists . In 1989 , Spin magazine ranked the album No. 5 on its list of The 25 Greatest Albums of All Time . In 2000 , Q magazine placed Led Zeppelin II at number 37 in its list of the 100 Greatest British Albums Ever . In 2003 , the album was ranked number 75 on Rolling Stone magazine 's list of the 500 greatest albums of all time .

== Accolades ==

(*) designates unordered lists .

== 2014 reissue ==

Along with the group 's self @-@ titled debut album and their third album , Led Zeppelin III , the album was remastered and reissued on 2 June 2014 . The reissue comes in six formats : a standard CD edition , a deluxe two @-@ CD edition , a standard LP version , a deluxe two @-@ LP version , a super deluxe two @-@ CD plus two @-@ LP version with a hardback book , and as high @-@ resolution , 96k / 24 @-@ bit digital downloads . The deluxe and super deluxe editions feature bonus material containing alternative takes , backing tracks and the previously unreleased instrumental , " La La " . The reissue was released with a negative version of the original album 's artwork as its bonus disc 's cover .

== Track listing ==

Cassette tape releases of the album had " Heartbreaker " ending the first side and " Thank You " starting the second side .

Original LP pressings of the album incorrectly listed the running time of " Thank You " at 3 : 50 , as the song 's coda features a false fade at that point .

== Deluxe edition bonus disc ==

== Sales chart performance ==

Original release
2014 reissue

== Singles ==

== Sales certifications ==

== Personnel ==

Led Zeppelin

John Bonham ? drums

John Paul Jones ? bass guitar , organ on " Thank You "

Jimmy Page ? electric and acoustic guitars , backing vocals , theremin on " Whole Lotta Love "

Robert Plant ? lead vocals , harmonica on " Bring It On Home "

= = Production = =

Barry Diament ? engineering (Transferred the Bob Ludwig mastered tape for the original 1987 Compact Disc)

George Chkiantz ? engineer on " Whole Lotta Love " and " What Is and What Should Never Be "

Peter Grant ? executive producer

Chris Huston ? engineering on " The Lemon Song " and " Moby Dick "

Andy Johns ? engineering on " Thank You "

Eddie Kramer ? engineering , mixing

Bob Ludwig ? mastering , engineering

George Marino ? engineering (1990 remastered CD)

John Davis ? engineering (2014 remastered CD)