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Living loving maids: Lez Zeppelin rocks Ferndale.

Led ladies

by **Eve Doster**
8/24/2005



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Even if you were never a fan of Led Zeppelin, there's no denying the foursome's raw sex appeal. Tight pants, curious bulges, molar-rattlin' riffs and endless airplay for "Stairway to Heaven" made Zeppelin one of the most important bands of all time until the death of drummer John Bonham ended the original group in 1980.

But fear not: There's a new way to hear the music that rocked an entire generation. Enter Lez Zeppelin, an all-female Led Zeppelin tribute band.

"The whole sexual prowess thing is very complicated," says guitar player Steph Paynes.

"The majority of hardcore Zeppelin fans were heterosexual men," she says. "Now they really *can* lust after us without having any sort of sexual conflict."

Paynes coyly avoids the question about the Lez's moniker being an obvious reference to their own sexuality by simply saying, "Our motto is, 'Don't ask, don't tell.' Whatever people want to think is fine."

The New York-based guitar player came up with the idea of an all-girl Zeppelin tribute band while on a retro music binge.

"I was having this phase where I was kind of rediscovering the band. I was lying on the couch listening to some Zeppelin and the idea just came to me."

After assembling three more worthy musicians, the band became her muse.

"I am endlessly interested in anything having to do with Led Zeppelin," Paynes

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says. But don't call her obsessed; Paynes believes that Led Zeppelin has transcended "tribute band" status.

"The idea of replicating music seems too shallow," she says. "The singing is never going to sound just like Robert Plant, the guitar is never going to sound just like Jimmy Page. As a result, it becomes *our* show."

Of course, Led Zeppelin is hardly the only Zep tribute band out there, but Paynes finds the others uninteresting, with the exception of the well-known Dread Zeppelin. "They are the only other tribute band we'd even consider playing with," Paynes says.

But the truth is, shticky, retro-style showcases are not their bag.

Led Zeppelin just wants to play some of the finest rock 'n' roll ever written.

When asked how she felt about the weird juxtaposition of her heroes' reputations as womanizers and her band's desire to be respected, Paynes replies with an audible wink, "Having girls line up to sleep with you — that's really got to do something to you. Who am I to judge?"

Sunday, Aug. 28, at the [Magic Bag](#), 22920 Woodward Ave., Ferndale; 248-544-3030.

Eve Doster is the listings editor for *Metro Times*. Send comments to edoster@metrotimes.com.

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