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|| THE ADVOCATE REPORT ||

## Lesbian Zeppelin

An all-female tribute band is creating a new generation of Zepheads.

By Jessica Hundley

From The Advocate March 13, 2007

Led Zeppelin is arguably the greatest rock band of all time, a powerhouse quartet who exploded in an ecstasy symbolized by fog-machine smoke, epic guitar distortion, and the tightest pants in rock and roll. The New York City-based, not-all-straight Lez Zeppelin has taken that magic formula and added a hefty dose of unexpected estrogen, reenacting the swagger and strut of forebears Page-Plant-Jones-Bonham with the delicacy of a feminine touch.



“It was divine inspiration,” says guitarist Steph Paynes of the cover band’s formation. “The forces that be came down and brought us together. [Led’s late drummer] John Bonham himself appeared in a vision and gave us a swift kick in the ass.”

Paynes recalls standing in her living room and listening intently to *Physical Graffiti*. “And I said to my friend who was there, ‘My ultimate fantasy is to have been in Led Zeppelin. I should start an all-girl tribute band.’” The friend agreed with Paynes, who then set out immediately to make her dream a reality.

While Paynes does a fine job of mimicking both Page’s fashion sense and his knack for playing his ax with a violin bow, drummer Helen Destroy has mastered Bonham’s heavy foot. The band also includes Sarah McLellan on vocal duty and Lisa Brigantino on bass, keyboards, and mandolin.

Since their inception in 2004, Lez Zeppelin has been gathering a rabid following of stoners, sullen teenagers, and randy lesbians. Their MySpace fan feedback ranges from the Led-ishly lewd (“Can’t wait to sneak in your back door!”) to the simple and sweet (“I love you”).

“We get all sorts,” says Paynes. “Twelve-year-old kids and their parents who saw Led Zep play in 1974. We get guys, girls, and gays of all kinds. It’s a completely eclectic crowd, but everyone has one thing in common, and that’s a mutual adoration of Led Zeppelin.”

The band is recording their first album, and thus far the real Led Zep has not taken their protégées to legal task for appropriating Led’s licensed properties, like the styling of their logo.

“It’s not a bad deal for them, really,” says Paynes, who hopes to one day meet her band’s inspiration. “People see us and it reignites their love of the original. After one of our shows, at least a few Led Zeppelin box sets must

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sell the next day.” —Jessica Hundley

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