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Concerts

Set List:

1. Black Mountain Side
2. Babe I'm Gonna Leave You
3. Hey, Hey What Can I Do
4. Dancing Days
5. Black Country Woman (omitted)
6. Going To California
7. That's The Way
8. Battle Of Evermore
9. Friends
10. Travelling Riverside Blues
11. Bon Y'Aur Stomp
12. Ramble On - encore



Artist: Lez Zeppelin
Venue: J&R Music World "Record Store Day" (New York, NY)
Date: 4/16/2011
Opener: n/a
Label: Pie Records

Written By: Ken Pierce (copyright 2011) for PiercingMetal.com

It was that time of the musical year again as Record Store Day hit the region with a melodic force of nature. I present it like this because while this is always an event to remember, the weather outside was doing its best to keep the adventurous gormandizer far away from the racks at J&R Music World. It would clearly have to do a lot worse to stop those kind of folks from taking advantage of the discounts at this store and to prevent them from enjoying some free music courtesy of the band Lez Zeppelin. In order to celebrate Record Store Day, the ladies would be doing a special acoustic set of Zeppelin classics and also giving people a chance to pick up their sophomore album "Lez Zeppelin I" and get it signed if they had such interest.

In the event that you don't know who Lez Zeppelin are let me quickly bring you up to speed about this all-female tribute to the legendary foursome. They've been together since 2004 and they count Steph Paynes (guitar), Shannon Conley (vocals), Megan Thomas (bass) and Leesa Harrington-Squyres (drums) among their number and they truly deliver an amazing Led Zeppelin experience for the fans. Musically they are top notch and while stellar in the vocal sense it needs to be stressed and made clear that singer Shannon Conley does not present herself as being a Robert (or Roberta Plant) clone with her register. That might bother some people, but suffice it to say she has a really nice voice.

It was a little after 3pm when the fun began and while the group is a foursome, their drummer Leesa appeared to be off today. When I joked about how drummers must hate the acoustic functions, I had learned that she had in fact broke her foot so was home resting in order to entertain in the immediate future. That left Steph, Shannon and Megan to their own devices and while they would miss the presence of their drummer, the music of Led Zeppelin very clearly works in an acoustic fashion without any doubt. There was a great crowd assembled for the appearance and if you have never seen these kind of setups before at the store, J&R essentially has a stage in the far back end of their main music releases outlet. The stage fits a five piece band comfortably and since we were dealing with three musicians this afternoon, space would not be an issue. Steph led us into the performance by performing "Black Mountain Side" which is an instrumental. She joked how they were probably one of the only bands that works their sound check into the actual performance, but no one seemed to mind. From here the ladies began a wonderful set with "Babe, I'm Gonna Leave You" and I had to say that Shannon really sounded great from the moment she began to sing. With her not doing a Plant mimic, it is safe to compare her tone to that of Heart's Ann Wilson. Never a bad thing to be referenced to a singer like that at the end of the day.

Moving onto "Hey, Hey What Can I Do" we found Shannon joking about her stool being very mobile and not letting her remain in one place. When she let her legs free from its base it would turn her around. It was rather funny, but surely had to be a little bit annoying when trying to focus on a tune. The audience banter was not solely coming from Shannon, but also Steph and generally done with a guitar cable decided to blast out some noise or when a guitar was being swapped for another. During the show it was Megan who had to keep track the most as she switched from Mandolin to acoustic guitar to acoustic bass. Whew. That is a lot to keep track of but she did fine and played the hell out of them. Speaking of playing the hell out of ones instrument, it was wonderful to see what a great player that Steph Paynes was and how deftly she handled the musical teachings of Jimmy Page.

As mentioned the band was celebrating the recently released "Lez Zeppelin I" which they were calling "LZ1" during the show. This is a tune for tune, note for note release of the Led Zeppelin debut album and I've recently reviewed it for the website. I enjoyed it, and felt that it fully delivered the bands premise to the listener and did a fine job of it. The funny thing about this particular set was that it would only feature two songs from the bands recent effort and instead do more from the seminal "Led Zeppelin IV" album. Believe me no one was complaining about this being the case. I really enjoy a lot of the Led Zep catalog and I know as a lifelong Rock fan that this is not really news to anyone who is similar to me, but I had to say that I was glad that they delivered songs like "Going To California" and "Battle Of Evermore" as I've always felt that those tunes moved me as a fan the most. Then expected standards of "The Ocean", "Stairway" and "Communication Breakdown" were not delivered but that was okay since you really need the power of the drummer behind those numbers. The band gave us a great "Travelling Riverside Blues" which the music historians will recall as a bit of an homage to the legendary Bluesman Robert Johnson. After "Bron Y'Aur Stomp" had completed the ladies asked if we wanted one more and of course the assembled audience roared for it. It was at this point the girls dished out a rousing "Ramble On" and left everyone wanting some more.

Once the band was done, guitarist Paynes said that this was pretty much the first full acoustic gig that they had ever done. Yes they play some acoustic numbers during a show, but this was a milestone for them and one that I hope they choose to revisit in the future with drummer Leesa. After some cleanup of the stage area was done, a table was set up and the

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signings began. I could not remain for much longer as I had to head uptown for the Overkill show, but there were a good 150-175 people waiting to meet with the band and get their CD and vinyl LP's signed. Yes, the band released a vinyl version of the album and they were quite happy about this as well. Having seen just how good Lez Zeppelin did their thing for this acoustic gig I am totally down to see them perform a fully electric set. I suggest you do the same. Be sure to check out that new album as well.

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