

January 28, 2008

Lez Zeppelin: Getting the led out



Lez Zeppelin

Emanation Records

By Al Kaufman

It sounds like too much of a gimmick to be any good; four women get together and form a Led Zeppelin cover band. Maybe good for a laugh or two, but that's about it.

Except these girls rock. Sarah McLellan can croon and caterwaul just as well as Robert Plant. Steph Paynes manages to match Jimmy Page's guitar note for note, not only technically, but passionately as well. Whether it's the old time bluesy "Since I've Been Loving You" or the straight ahead "Rock and Roll" and "Communications Breakdown," the girls pack all the fire, fury, and swagger of the ovarian-challenged originals. Their two original instrumentals, the Allman Brother's influenced "On the Rocks," and the softer "Winter Sun," in which Lisa Brigantino's mandolin recalls Zeppelin's gentle "Going to California," demonstrate that these girls are damn fine musicians in their own right.

Yes, they're fun, but they are also real. Producer Eddie Kramer originally worked with Led Zeppelin (as well as Jimi Hendrix and Kiss), and George Marino, who mastered the CD, also digitally remastered, with Jimmy Page, all the original Led Zeppelin recordings. These are guys who would not sully their names by teaming up with some kind of gimmicky freak show. These are four great musicians who happen to love the testosterone fueled music of Led Zeppelin, and play it with just the right amount of creativity and reverence.

The only real question about them left to ask is, "Will they ever play 'The Lemon Song'?"

Lez Zeppelin plays at Variety Playhouse on Friday, June 29th. 8:30 pm. \$15.