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Led Zeppelin Tribute Band

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Lez Zeppelin: The Song Remains the Same. But There are Twists.



Saturday, 04 August 2007

Sat. Aug. 4

The name of the band is **Lez Zeppelin** and guitarist Steph Haynes says, "It always elicits some response. It's the greatest band name ever. They know we're all girls and we're playing Led Zeppelin. As to the other implications, whatever that may be or not be ...We believe in a good dose of mystery, it's so rare these days." So, if any of the four are lesbians, well, we don't know it here. We do know, from Paynes, that she's heard back from one of the surviving Zeps and he gets it, loves what they're doing. And they'll be doing it **Saturday Aug. 4 at the Middle East Downstairs.**



"We're doing this is a sincere and reverent way, without sounding corny," says Paynes. "We have total respect for the music. People enjoy we're girls, There are twists, it's a very sexy act. But the music we take extremely seriously. It's not meant to be a piss-take. It's the emotion you play with and the way you feel the power."

The New York-based band - fleshed out by singer Sarah McLellan, bassist-keyboardist Lisa Brigantino and drummer Helen Destroy - just released their eponymous debut CD, recorded with Eddie Kramer (who's worked with Zep, Kiss and many more). It features six Zep songs and two of their own Zep-like instrumentals. They have about 40 Zeppelin songs they can chose from in concert, pretty much everything through "Physical Graffiti." "We're itching to to do "In Through the Out Doors,"" says Paynes.

Response? They just went over like gangbusters in England at a metal festival. Spin has said they might be "the most powerful all-female band in rock history." The New Yorker says "these ladies channel the sonic bombast of Led Zeppelin and gleefully invert the band's original sexual essence." An important part if, says Paynes, is they're not playing the tribute band circuit. Paynes, who put Lez Zep together, had been in original bands, including an all-female outfit, and saw this band "as an extension of our ballsiness. We're just gonna present ourselves like classical musicians who would interpret Beethoven. We've created our little vibe to it and bring ourselves to it."

The audience, she says, is a demographic dream: young, middle, old, male, female. "Anyone alive has heard Zeppelin," says Paynes. "The music is so timeless, it shocks many people how relevant it still is." Band of Thieves opens around 10 p.m. Tickets: \$20.

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Jim has covered Boston arts and events since 1978. In addition to this column, JimSullivanInk, he is a freelance columnist for the likes of the *Boston Phoenix*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, **Search Boston** and *Hall of Fame Magazine*.

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