



Experiencing Led Zeppelin: A Listener's Companion

By Gregg Akkerman

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In 1980, Led Zeppelin formally disbanded following the death of drummer John Bonham. Yet over three decade, the music, the mystique, and the legacy of this legendary rock act lives on. Reissues of their music sell in the millions, while rumors of reunion tours continue to electrify fans across the globe. The various solo projects pursued by the three surviving members—Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, and John Paul Jones—will forever live the shadow of the blinding light they generated as Led Zeppelin.

In *Experiencing Led Zeppelin: A Listener's Companion*, musician and writer Gregg Akkerman looks behind the curtain of “rock gods” sensationalism at this performing act's *musical* legacy through their studio and live recordings. Drawing on his many years as a rock musician and music scholar, Akkerman peeks under the hood to explain not just the when and the where of Led Zeppelin's music, but the why. Putting readers right there, in the times and places where the band was recording and performing its iconic numbers, Akkerman is the voice whispering in the ear of anyone interested in understanding how Led Zeppelin's music *works*.

Experiencing Led Zeppelin: A Listener's Companion is for the die-hard Led Zeppelin fan and the first-timer just discovering the brilliance of this super band.

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Editorial Review

Review

Akkerman delivers an excellent look at Led Zeppelin's music, focusing on each of the band's nine studio albums between 1968 and 1979, with a song-by-song analysis—with some examples from live concerts—that proves how well the music 'has weathered the passing of the decades.' It helps that Akkerman is a self-professed 'fan but not a Led Zeppelin fanatic.' This allows him to effectively articulate which songs stand out. . . . [E]ach page reveals some new aspect of Zeppelin's legacy sound—even in 'Stairway to Heaven,' as Akkerman looks at the harmonic importance of the song's A-minor key. Even the most hardcore Zeppelin critic will listen again when the song is played on the radio for the millionth time. (*Publishers Weekly*)

Whether you are a musician or not the book is a wonderful addition to your library. It's fun just to play a tune and read the essay on it and gain a deeper understanding of the song. It is a library quality hardcover, one that you will be proud to have on your bookshelf. . . . Akkerman has created a must own book for any Zeppelin fan. Check it out, learn a bit more about the songs you have probably heard a hundred times and find some gems you might not have known even existed. (*Scared Stiff Reviews*)

In *Experiencing Led Zeppelin: A Listener's Companion*, [Gregg Akkermann] brings a measured fans perspective to listen to the Monolith that is Led Zeppelin. . . . Akkermann first provides a brief introduction to the band and the recent history to its formation in the late-1960s. He then proceeds to take us through each recording, detailing its history and highlighting some of the more provocative songs on each. Of greatest interest to me was the clear fashion Akkermann was able to frame the last two studio albums, *Presence* (Black Swan, 1976) and *In Through the Out Door* (Black Swan, 1979), giving me a better appreciation for these recordings. (*All About Jazz*)

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About the Author

Gregg Akkerman is a performer, educator, and writer. He served for over a decade as professor of music at the University of South Carolina Upstate before returning to private life in southern California as a working musician and music instructor. He is the author of the biography *The Last Balladeer: The Johnny Hartman Story* and is editor of Listener's Companion series from Rowman & Littlefield.

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