

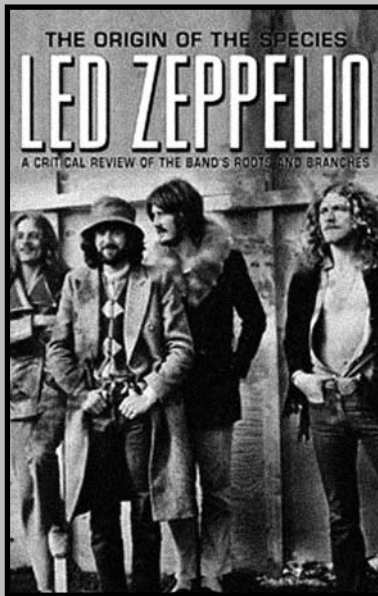
# Resurrection Section

Legends At Large, Radical Reissues & Killer Compilations by Jim Kaz

## Classic Rock is all the rage!

You can't turn on FM radio without hearing the term "classic rock." But, what does that actually mean? Is it a genre, or a generic catchall term describing anything musically vintage? The answer, is, well, both. Classic rock has become a genre of sorts over the past two decades or so. But the term originated with radio programmers seeking to categorize playlists of mostly '60s and '70s music—ranging from hard and progressive rock to psychedelic and even some pop-oriented stuff. Heavies in the classic rock arena include all the usual suspects: The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, The Who, etc. All of these bands have sold zillions of records and started making music at least 30 years ago—two points to consider when talking about this stuff. But classic rock radio is not the same thing as "oldies" radio—one major difference being that the format revolves more around individual album tracks as opposed to pop singles, a staple in the oldies market. This time around, I've got a few recent releases and reissues from some of the scene's most prominent—and oddball—players.

Robert Plant has personified the flesh-and-blood, rock-star deity from day one. But besides his turn fronting the mighty Led Zeppelin, he's also had quite a prolific solo career for the past 25 years that has seen him explore the artier side of rock. The *Nine Lives* box from Rhino (Rhino.com) features all of Plant's nine solo albums plus a DVD comp of video clips, all in one smooth package. Many Zeppelin purists were chagrined by Plant's contemporary direction. But there's still quite a bit in his solo cache to please the old-school fans, as well as those enamored by his sophisticated transformation. My pick for best solo endeavor is the first album, *Pictures At Eleven*, featuring some excellent guitar work by Robbie Blunt on tracks like "Burning Down One Side" and "Like I've



Never Been Gone." Another gem in this set is the inclusion of *The Honeydrippers: Volume One* EP—a project that included Jimmy Page and Jeff Beck on a collection of songs from the '50s and '60, including the hit single "Sea Of Love" and the spirited "Rockin' At Midnight." Check out the pristine remastered version, along with all of Plant's other post-Zep offerings in this impressive set.

Zeppelin completists should be pleased with *Led Zeppelin: The Origin of the Species* from MVD (MusicVideoDistributors.com). This insightful documentary DVD explores all that led up to the forming of the mighty behemoth, through a series of interviews, live clips and archival footage. The story of the band's influences and origins is highly compelling, in spite of the quality of the source material varying a bit. But with the official Zep catalog as tightly controlled as it is, anything outside is bound to have a flaw or two. Either way, at an economical price, this piece is worth your while.

For classic heavy rock, Deep Purple is right there alongside Zeppelin and Black Sabbath, infusing their version with deep organ textures and guitarist Ritchie Blackmore's classical-flavored bits. Even now, without the mysterious Mr. Blackmore in the ranks, the band still continues to turn out viable hard rock. *Rapture of the Deep* was originally released last year and included an eclectic mix of numbers ranging from the driving groove of "Girls Like That" to the hazy, Eastern flair of the title track and the bittersweet tones of the ballad "Clearly Quite Absurd." Eagle Records has recently released an expanded "special edition" of the acclaimed album. This two-disc issue includes the original

album and a second disc of bonus alternative versions and live renditions of "Smoke On The Water" and "Perfect Strangers." For more information, go to EagleRockEnt.com.

Loud. Rude. Irreverent...nope, I'm not talking about the Sex Pistols. Grand Funk Railroad sold tons of records for a spell during the '70s. Led by the outspoken Mark Farner, this surly power trio