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The Songs Are Not the Same

Followed or Led

By Ed Masley

Article Published Oct 5, 2006

Should a plumber receive a royalty check every time a toilet he's installed is flushed? It's an interesting question, posed by Led Zeppelin biographer Alan Clayson as he mounts a defense of what others have characterized as outright theft in the *Led Zeppelin: The Origin of the Species* DVD (released by Music Video Distribution). Promising a "complicated and sometimes controversial story," this DVD offers a lively discussion on whether those early Led Zeppelin recordings constitute a textbook case of shameless plagiarism or the birth of something new. And while the documentary is unauthorized, that thankfully didn't prevent the makers from licensing both Led Zeppelin's music and the songs they stand accused of ripping off. In some cases, it's hard to deny the similarities, but sometimes they're just reaching here. "Communication Breakdown" doesn't sound a thing like Eddie Cochran's "Nervous Breakdown." And even after hearing Robert Plant's performance of "Whole Lotta Love" back-to-back with the Small Faces covering Willie Dixon's "You Need Lovin'," in the end, it's what they did with what they stole that made their music matter. No, they didn't make a new wheel. They just took a bunch of old wheels, reinvented those and changed the course of music history.

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Music Details

Who / What:

[Led Zeppelin: The Origin of the Species](#)

Music Genre:

Rock

Warner Music Sweden



A new DVD digs for Led Zeppelin's roots.

[Underground Thursdays](#)

Turntable

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