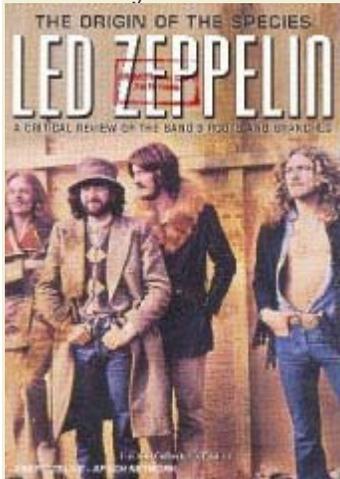




• ...AND A "Z"

Review by Scott Jason



LED ZEPPELIN:
THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES
~70 mins
MVD

How much Led Zeppelin is too much led Zeppelin? For diehard fans, the answer is “never”—and that includes myself. Around the time this disc came out back in August, Rolling Stone ran yet another Zep cover story. Desperation? Overkill? As written by crack music journo Mikal Gilmore, it was an excellent article, a fine primer for the new generation of kids who are embracing classic rock. This disc, subtitled A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE BAND’S ROOTS AND BRANCHES (yes, it’s another Sexy Intellectual/ChromeDreams disc, effectively another “under review” doc) works as a perfect complement to Gilmore’s article, taking a lot of the ground he covered but adding plenty of archive footage and really good commentary (author/journalists Phil Sutcliffe, Barney Hoskyns, Alan Clayson, but also musicians including former Yardbirds guitarist Chris Dreja, Chris Farlowe and Dave “The Crying Game” Berry). *[Subsequent investigation has turned up that this disc is a companion to Clayson’s book, which has the same title but a different subtitle—[How, Why, and Where It All Began](#)—which is published by ChromeDreams in the UK. —Editor]*

True to the disc’s subtitle, this documentary explores the band’s roots going all the way back to Jimmy Page’s teenage guitar playing, and the footage of Page, aged 14, performing live with JP’s Skiffle Group on Huw Wheldon’s ALL YOUR OWN talent show on the BBC in 1958 is priceless (but once again, we only get a couple of clips not the whole performance—damn!). Zeppelin’s first two albums are the focus here, and we get the back-story on songs like “Bring It On Home,” which Page and Plant claimed as theirs but was lifted from Sonny Boy Williamson; and “Whole Lotta Love” is a riff off “You Need Love” by Willie Dixon. While Clayson defends this plagiarism as an evolution from their blues roots, Sutcliffe, who won’t condemn them either, at least states it would have behooved them to be more scrupulous with their credits. Fascinating stuff!

Highly recommended for Zepp newbies, and a worthwhile investment for the rest of us who came of age listening to “Stairway To Heaven.”

- [\\$18.95 at Amazon](#) 