



HISTORY

The First Americans, 2

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Every native language that disappears takes with it clues to philosophies, histories and irreplaceable environmental wisdom accumulated over many millennia. More than half of the remaining 140 native languages may fall silent unless organized action is taken to teach them. In the U.S., nine centers now offer immersion language courses to young tribal members.

Native language distribution gives tantalizing clues to early migrations. For example, the tribes in the lower Hudson Valley all spoke an Algonquian language—but an Algonquian tongue was spoken as far west as Montana by the Blackfoot and by the Cree in subarctic Canada. Sioux was spoken in the Great Plains by the proud tribe of that name, but it was also the language in what are now Virginia and the Carolinas.

Indian Contributions

Indians made important contributions to the world's food supply, including corn, potatoes and sweet potatoes, manioc, peanuts, squash, peppers, tomatoes, pumpkins, beans, avocados, and dozens of other vegetables and herbs. Indian societies were well acquainted with plant medicines.

Before 1492, 40 percent of the modern world's medicinal drugs were being used in America to treat illnesses. Among these remedies were coca (cocaine as a pain-killer), curare (a muscle relaxant), cinchona bark (quinine, for treating malaria), cascara sagrada (a laxative), datura (a pain-reliever), and ephedra (relief from allergies and asthma).

Indians ritually identified themselves with the animals they hunted. Common to Indian life was shamanism, an animalistic religion of Asiatic origin in which mediation between

the visible and the spirit world is performed by shamans. Shamanist practices have been documented in cultures as diverse as Iron Age Ireland, pagan Scandinavia, classical Greece, and ice-bound Siberia.

Sometimes described as "medicine men," the shamans' powers went beyond treating the sick. In the Americas, they ranged from soothsayers, magicians and hypnotists to trained priests who presided over formal rituals and entire cults. Interestingly, the growth of consciousness-raising New Age movements in the 1980s fostered new interest in shamanism.

Like the philosophers Montaigne and Rousseau, it is easy to sentimentalize Indians as "noble savages." Far from being idyllic, their existence was harsh. The average life span barely exceeded 35 years; infant mortality was high. Evidence from graves reveals that diseases like arthritis and tuberculosis were common, and

tooth decay was a problem.

Our modern world owes much to Indians, far beyond the woodcraft skills taught in summer camps and the foolish names applied to professional baseball and football teams. We are still in the process of learning truths they knew instinctively in their reverence for nature—that the land and its resources are not only for our use but must be preserved for generations to come.

In addition to the communality of land and possessions, belief in the freedom and dignity of the individual was common to many Indian societies. With patient research and a measure of good luck, we may yet learn the secret of the Indians' relationship with nature, and their basic sense of equality and respect for human rights.

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MUSIC



THE SOUNDS OF BLUE

By BOB PUTIGNANO

Robert Plant's Blue Note DVD

"Covering it all; five decades of Robert Plant in two hours and thirty-five minutes." Rating: 7

Chrome Dreams UK Import MVD Visual

This lengthy (one hundred and fifty-five minute) DVD chronicles Robert Plant's well known historic career covering his earliest influences and performances. Just so you know this was not Plant's doings as the video is not authorized by Plant nor his record company or management.

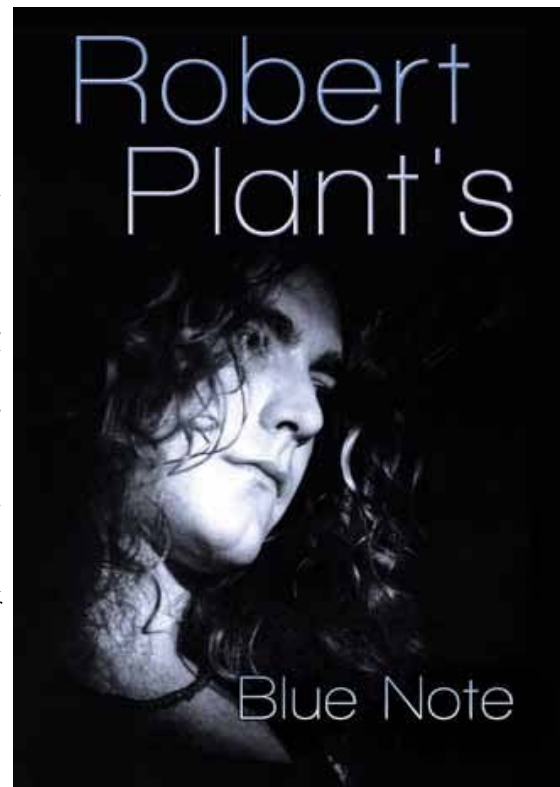
It's not all about Led Zeppelin either, as there is footage of Son House, Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, the Yardbirds (with Jeff Beck and Jimmy

Page,) where we learn how he was influenced by Elvis, Muddy, and San Francisco groups like the Jefferson Airplane and the Moby Grape. There's also a recent interview clip of Plant from 2010, and post Zep collaborators guitarist Robbie Blunt, producer Phil Johnstone, and the Egyptian singer Hossam Ramzy. Also not left on the cutting room floor there's time spent on Plant's solo work; 1983's "The Principle of Moments," 88's "Now and Zen," '06's "Mighty Rearranger," and 07's "Raising Sand." Bantered about are also Plant related bands like Band of Joy, his reuniting with Jimmy Page (who did not want another updated version of Led Zep.), his work with Allison Krauss, and T Bone Burnett. Speaking of Page, there's an interview with Jimmy, as well as several others.

All in all this is a full representation of Plant's life

story that also (at times) portrays his non-performing look at life as well. Additionally I found that learning about his influences quite interesting as it enabled me to understand more fully about what Page is all about. It also depicts how Plant has moved-on from Zeppelin, while insinuating that Jimmy Page has not, where it's obvious that Plant's lust for all kinds of musical genre's are much more far-reaching than the guitar-god Page. So if you need a heaping helping of Robert Plant, this documentary is it. But long story short, I found this video to be too long to endure in one viewing. Then again, fully covering five decades on anyone's career would have to make for an extensive project, and when you factor in all of the interesting rare footage, interview segments with his musical collaborations, as well as music critics segments: I would have to say that the hard-work compiling all of this for the namesake of "Robert Plant's Blue Note," is a compelling piece of work. That (when watched in several sittings) is one heck of a tribute to Mr. Plant, and a treat for his fans.

Bob Putignano www.SoundsofBlue.com



6.3 vs. 6.5

