



Led Blimpie: A Tribute to Led Zeppelin from Hell's Kitchen Liner Notes

Originally begun as a 3 song demo, this project evolved into a full-on research project to discover the recording styles used to capture Zeppelin's original tracks. Sifting through over 3 decades of interviews, finding the gems where Page revealed his approach, the band enrolled in "Zeppelin University" and received their doctorate in "Jimmy Page's Recording Techniques".

The result is their thesis, an album entitled: A Tribute to Led Zeppelin from Hell's Kitchen. The physical CD and digipack are adorned with original Led Blimpie artwork that parodies the iconic Zeppelin imagery.

"This was one of the most challenging projects I've ever had as a producer/engineer...think of it; to create an accurate reproduction of Jimmy Page's late 60's/early 70's analog productions using modern recording gear in my small project studio. Hats off to the boys in the band and to everyone involved.. Enjoy!"

-Freddie Katz
Co-Producer/Engineer

Following is a track-by-track telling of how it all came together by Co-Producer and Led Blimpie guitarist, Thor Fields.



Black Dog -originally from Led Zeppelin IV

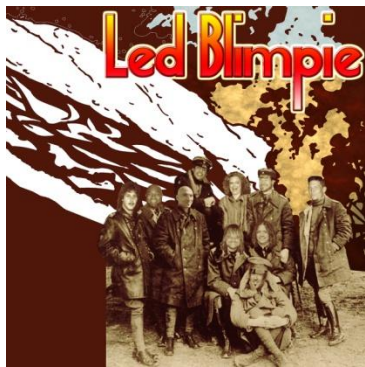
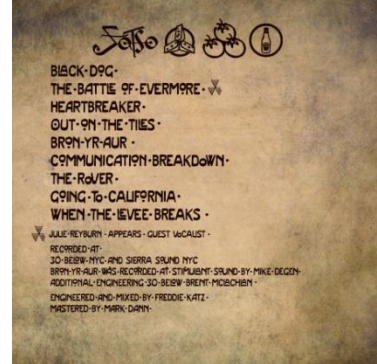
The guitar tone on this particular track has a very distinct sound. The left guitar was played live with the band through a Marshall JCM 800 half stack with 4X12's, while the right and middle (overdubbed) guitars went straight into the mic channel of the mixing board and then into

two compressors in series. For the Leslie sounds on the solo, we used the Neo Instruments "Ventilator" in stereo (outputting to two amps). Very unconventional...very Jimmy Page.

The Battle of Evermore *

-originally from Led Zeppelin IV

At the time of this recording, singer, Jon had only recently joined the group and had not yet performed live with the band. Guest vocalist, Julie Reyrburn, was 8 months pregnant when she recorded her track. Inspired by working together, the two singers developed some new harmonies as well as an original ending. I used my Epiphone for the three mandolin parts and the guitar was played on Freddie's Takamine EF-349 acoustic. Being that there is no percussion on this song, we had to listen very closely to the original to see how all the layers came together. Page employed an ingenious use of reverb and delay that serves to lend some percussiveness to the track. There is a very subtle build-up of layers - almost none in the beginning of the song to multiple slap-backs, echoes, delays and verbs by the end.



Heartbreaker

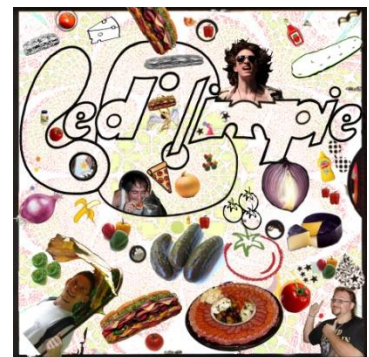
-originally from Led Zeppelin II

Heartbreaker has that tricky, unaccompanied guitar solo right in the middle. If we were going to record this song, the solo HAD to be flawless. Sure, I'd played it hundreds of times at shows...but never the same way twice. Plus, the question loomed large in my head: "Could I do it under the 'microscope' of the studio while the machine was on record"? If it was to be preserved for posterity, I'd have to nail it." Interestingly enough, while researching Page's original recording process, I discovered that the solo in question was from a completely different session and only LATER was it added to the track. In fact, if you listen closely, you might notice that the guitar solo is slightly sharp of the rest of the song. Inspired by this, I decided to record the solo FIRST. If I nailed it, great, we'd record the whole song. If not, then, too bad... I'm very pleased with how it turned out. Certainly not exactly how Page played it, but I think I captured the idea nicely. (...and slightly sharp too).

Out on the Tiles

-originally from Led Zeppelin III

This is one of our favorite songs to play. It's one where we stray a bit from the original into a little jam. We also do our own ending. Since the original track just fades, Bassist Joe, insisted that we keep rockin' - for the fun of it. The solo at the end was a pure, spur-of-the-moment thing that happened, while the rhythm guitar underneath it was an overdub. There is not a lot of info available about the recording of the original, so co-producer, Freddie and I had to get creative. For our recording, the left guitar was played live on the Les Paul Custom through the Marshall JCM 800, The right guitar was a Fender Strat through a Fender "red knob" Twin known as "the evil Twin". As always, we employed the use of



careful mic placement to achieve the tones.

Says Page:

"Now that is exactly what I was talking about: close-miking and distance-miking, that's ambient sound. Getting the distance of the time lag from one end of the room to the other and putting that in as well. The whole idea, the way I see recording, is to try and capture the sound of the room live and the emotion of the whole moment and try to convey that across. That's the very essence of it. And so, consequently you've got to capture as much of the room sound as possible."

-Jimmy Page discussing Out on the Tiles (Steve Rosen Interview 1977)



Bron-Yr-Aur **

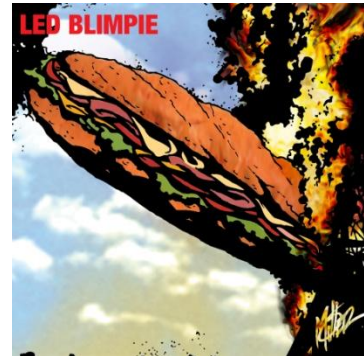
– originally from Physical Graffiti

This track employs a clever use of reverse reverb, a recording technique created by Jimmy Page that he developed during his days with The Yardbirds. I played this track on my cheap S101 standard 'knock-around' acoustic guitar (made in China). We got some great tones out of it. Just goes to show how good mic placement and solid recording technique can work wonders.

Communication Breakdown

– originally from Led Zeppelin I

For this song, I used my Fernandez* Telecaster going through the Marshall. The main track was laid down live in the studio with the band. At the time of recording, I couldn't get my hands on a Supro Accordion amplifier, which is what Page used on the original. To achieve a similar sound we tweaked the Marshall for the live take and used the Fender "evil" Twin for the overdubs. I used my Fulltone SoulBender pedal (based on the legendary Colorsound made by Sola-Sound/England) for the solo. Once again, we saw the opportunity to "make this one our own". Singer, Jon, added a slightly different harmony on the "outro" chorus and, we came up with our own, super-tight ending.



*Known as the "lawsuit guitar" the truth is that Fender never actually sued Fernandez. (Fernandez DID, however, change their the design of their guitar after Gibson sued another 'clone' guitar company)



The Rover

– originally from Physical Graffiti

The Rover is a song that Zeppelin never played live in its entirety, although, some of the riffs were used as an intro for their live performances of Sick Again in 1977. They did, however, play the song in its entirety during a sound-check July, 6, 1973 at Chicago Stadium which has been heard as a bootleg. I played Freddie's red Les Paul Studio and ran it through a borrowed '79 JMP Marshall head. Our version accurately

represents the orchestrated 'guitar army' of the original album, but with a faster, more energetic tempo, reminiscent of the Zeppelin sound-check

Going to California

– originally from Led Zeppelin IV

Part of what was (at the time) going to be our 3 song acoustic 'demo', Going to California was the first song that Jon laid down for this album. "I remember our discussions about the vocal approach we were going for. We agreed that Jon would NOT attempt to do a Robert Plant impersonation at all. A true Led Zeppelin devotee, Jon would remain faithful to the iconic melodies while imparting his own personality and character to the performance. I was thrilled with the results." – Thor



When the Levee Breaks

– originally from Led Zeppelin IV

Creating a faithful cover of When the Levee Breaks represented quite a number of challenges. The original Zep track was played in open G tuning and subsequently the tape was slowed down which gives it that thick, plodding sound. Together with Bonham's epic drums which were recorded in an open, two level circular stairway at Headley Grange, these elements give the song a unique sonic landscape which serves as a foundation for the remaining musical layers. "I decided right from the start that we weren't going to do the 'slow-down' thing with our version.

Since we weren't recording to tape, I wasn't confident that digitally slowing down the track would have the same affect." The main guitar track is played on my double-neck Gibson ES-1275 in an open F tuning. There is plenty of reverse reverb on the guitar as well as the harmonica and we even recreated the backwards guitar riff/solo towards the end. To accomplish this, I listened to the Zeppelin track played backwards, to hear what Jimmy actually played. I played the riff and then we reversed it. It worked like a charm." Jon learned to play harmonica for our tribute. This track represents his very first recording on the instrument! His harp went through a Fender Deluxe 85 guitar amp to give it that gritty, old-time feel.

CREDITS:

Led Blimpie: A Tribute to Led Zeppelin from Hell's Kitchen

Jon Conver - Vocals, Harmonica

Thor Fields - Electric Guitars, Acoustic Guitars, Mandolin

Joe Nerve - Bass

Matt Nonnenmacher - Drums

Produced by:

Thor Fields and Freddie Katz

*Julie Reyburn appears - guest vocalist

Recorded at 30 Below, NYC and Sierra Sound, NYC

**Bron-Yr-Aur was recorded at Stimulant Sound by Mike Degan

Additional engineering by Brent McLachlan

Engineered and Mixed by Freddie Katz

Mastered by Mark Dann

LED BLIMPIE

MATT NONNENMACHER
DRUMS

BLACK DOG
(Page, Plant, Jones)
THE BATTLE OF EVERMORE
(Page, Plant)

HEARTBREAKER
(Page, Plant, Jones)

OUT ON THE TILES
(Bonham, Page, Plant)

BRON-YR-AUR
(Page)

COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN
(Page, Jones, Bonham, Plant)

THE ROVER
(Page, Plant)

GOING TO CALIFORNIA
(Page, Plant)

WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS
(Page, Plant, Bonham, Jones, Memphis Minnie)

JON CONVER
VOCALS, HARMONICA

THOR FIELDS
ELECTRIC GUITARS, ACOUSTIC GUITARS
MANDOLINS

PRODUCED BY
THOR FIELDS and FREDDIE KATZ

JOE NERVE
BASS

Front Cover Design: The Rev. William Marshall
Back Cover Photo: Bjorn Bolinder



Line Art: Rich Miller
Layout: Odin Meadows