

Playing Plant and Page

Music Classic Albums Live returns to New Brunswick with 'Led Zeppelin II'

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You can call *Led Zeppelin II* a lot of things: bombastic, over-the-top, hard-hitting, ground-breaking. Just don't call it heavy metal.

"It gets labelled with that term 'heavy metal,'" says Craig Martin, producer of the Classic Albums Live concert series. "I find that distasteful. It has hard rock, folk and blues. But it is *not* heavy metal."

Too true, given that the mighty Zep's roots – as with many of its British contemporaries, including Black Sabbath – were steeped in the American blues traditions across the pond.

As anyone who took in the *Dark Side of the Moon* show last January will know, Classic Albums Live puts a group of musicians on stage to recreate a classic slab of wax from A to Z, note for note.

CAL's Pink Floyd show sold out at Saint John's Imperial Theatre. Now, 10 months later, it's back with an all-new musical crew.

Martin's rotating musical posse has reproduced *Back in Black*

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(AC/DC), *A Night at the Opera* (Queen), *Exile on Main Street* (Stones), *Who's Next* (The Who) and *Sgt. Pepper* (Beatles), among others.

He got the idea a few years ago while fronting a Stones cover band. These days, CAL plays 200 dates a year and Martin is looking to conquer the UK, too.

Martin is something of a rock and roll evangelist. He's prone to overstatement, but his enthusiasm is infectious. If it's been awhile since you've put *Zep II* on the CD player or turntable (kids, download the whole thing onto your iPod now), those nine tracks and 41 minutes are nothing but ear-shredding bliss.

"I am 45. I grew up with this record. I struggled with trying to learn those licks. I am in total awe of this music. There is a groove to it, a swing to it," Martin said.



COURTESY PHOTO

PLEASE SEE → ZEPPLIN, D2

Channelling the spirit and music of Jimmy Page: Classic Albums Live will bring the beloved rock album to life at shows in Saint John, Fredericton and Moncton.