

Classics are back



Special to The Review

The Classic Albums Live series resumes tonight at Zooz with Led Zeppelin I.

Zooz concerts replicate classic albums track for track, note for note

BY JOHN LAW
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STEVENSVILLE – It won't be Led Zeppelin playing the Zooz amphitheatre tonight, but if you close your eyes, you might think twice.

It's all in the details for Classic Albums Live, a Toronto-based ensemble of musicians who perform note-for-note versions of rock's greatest albums.

Everything from Bruce Springsteen's *Born to Run* to AC/DC's *Back in Black* is played with such precision, even die-hard fans struggle to spot the difference.

Fans like Zooz' entertainment director Stephen Casey. Three years ago, he headed to Toronto to see the company perform *Led Zeppelin II*. Before the show, he had his doubts. Afterwards, he couldn't wait to sign them.

"I was totally blown away by it," he recalled. "You could turn around and look the opposite way, and swear to God Led Zeppelin was on stage."

"It was so impressive, I came back and put together a proposal (for Zooz) and said, 'Let's skip everything else and let's just do these shows.'"

By all accounts, it has been a spectacular – and somewhat surprising – success. After all, even the best cover bands couldn't hope for more than a few hundred people per show.

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At Zooz, Classic Albums Live routinely draws about 2,500 people every concert, whether it's Queen's *A Night at the Opera* or The Beatles' *White Album*.

Last season's main event – an impeccably-reproduced performance of Pink Floyd's *The Wall* complete with children's chorus – drew 3,500 people, making it one of Niagara's biggest concerts of the year.

(By comparison, the Avalon Ballroom at the Niagara Fallsview Casino capacity is 1,500 seats.)

Classic Albums Live's secret is to go for sonic authenticity instead of visual. The performers rarely look

like their real-life counterparts, but they can mimic the music with stunning precision. Every track from the album they perform is played in sequence and no detail is overlooked.

"They all wear black, actually," said Casey. "It's all about the music. It's as close as possible to the album."

After tonight, the series continues with Who's Next (*The Who*) July 21; *Crime of the Century* (*Supertramp*) Aug. 4; *Dark Side of the Moon* (*Pink Floyd*) Aug. 18; and a double dose of *Rush* Sept. 1 with *2112* and *Moving Pictures*.

Tickets for each show are \$15 and doors open at 7 p.m.