

## SONG OF THE DAY XCV

When it comes to **EPIC** Led Zeppelin songs, what good would it be if we didn't have a little bit of controversy? Today's song - as well as the next two - all have controversy hanging over them, but as I have stated prior, the versions of this - and the following two songs - are just so good and so superior to their original incarnations that you cannot deny the fact that Zeppelin brought so much more to these tunes than anyone, even the original writers/performers, could possibly do.

So with that said, let's jump into our version of the Doc Brown DeLorean and go back in time to "Led Zeppelin" - the first album - and a track clocking in at 6:26, the closing track on side one, the labyrinth of Page and his guitar explorations, "Dazed & Confused."

By now, everyone should know the story of Jake Holmes and his album "The Above Ground Sound Of Jake Holmes." Jake had a song on that album titled "Dazed And Confused" and in 1967 he opened a show for The Yardbirds, who were so impressed with the song that they decided to work up their own version, calling it "I'm Confused" and employing a lengthy Page violin bow solo section. One The Yardbirds broke up, Jimmy introduced this to Plant/Jones/Bonham and rewrote the lyrics {or Robert did, but as he was under contract to a different company at the time, he couldn't be "credited" as writing any songs on "Zep I"} and changed the melody just enough but did restore the original title to "Dazed & Confused."

So... now that we have all of that out of the way, let's dive into this song and cover the plethora of reasons why it is such an **EPIC** Led Zeppelin song.

John Paul's descending bass riff begins the song and is another in a long line of instantly recognizable riffs in the Zeppelin catalog. When Page enters with harmonics, wah-wah and bent notes behind the nut, the song takes on an eerie disposition and leaves the listener guessing as to what is going to happen next.

Over their career Zeppelin made it a habit of taking a song that starts off slowly and then building it up, speeding it up, until it just explodes in a way that was totally unexpected and "Dazed & Confused" is really the start of that process. I know that "Babe, I'm Gonna Leave You" was the second song on the album and thus, appeared before "Dazed," but that song never picks up the steam that "Dazed" does, nor does it rock out as hard or as energetic either.

When Plant enters, his voice is filled with emotion, angst and vengeance. It amazes me that Robert was just past his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday when this song was recorded; the power and - just as important - the control - he had in his voice, is far beyond his years. It truly was, just as Jimmy Page once said, like another instrument in the band.

Been dazed and confused

For so long it's not true

Wanted a woman

Never bargained for you

Lots of people talking

Few of them know

Soul of a woman

Was created below

Yeah...

The band kicks in with that eerie riff, Page's over-dubbed guitar doubling the riff an octave higher as Bonham provides some interesting drum bits and John Paul's bass continues looming large over the entire ensemble.

You hurt and abuse

Telling all of your lies

Run 'round sweet baby

Lord, how they hypnotize  
Sweet little baby  
I don't know where you been  
Gonna love you baby  
Here I come again

At this point Jimmy kicks in with a monstrous riff before it settles back into the eerie part, but Bonham's drumming during this section is more varied and more exciting than the first time through as he constantly adds new things and pushes the band forward.

Every day I work so hard  
Bringing home my hard-earned pay  
Try to love you baby  
But you push me away  
Don't know where you're goin'  
Only know just where you been  
Sweet little baby  
I want you again

More of the monstrous Page riff and then we get something new; another rather menacing section where Plant adds several "Ah" vocal bits in, basically a call and response between him and Jimmy's guitar. This is the first track to feature Jimmy playing the violin bow on his guitar in the studio on a Led Zeppelin song and would prove to be one of the legendary Page trademarks throughout his career.

During this entire call and response - bowed guitar section, the interplay between Jonsey and Bonham is fantastic, proving even in the very earliest of Zeppelin's days, these two had forged an extremely tight musical bond.

After several moments of this segment, everything just erupts as Jimmy takes off on a rapid-fire solo with Bonham the driving force behind him. Beginning at the 4:57 mark Bonham just dominates the song until at 5:02 Jimmy takes over with that tremendous riff again as John Paul echoes him on the bass. Bonham kicks back in at 5:06 and joins the riff section before they once again settle into the groove with Jimmy's overdubbed guitars and again, Bonham is simply amazing throughout this section which eventually leads us back to Plant.

**Been dazed and confused**

**For so long it's not true**

**Wanted a woman**

**Never bargained for you**

**Take it easy baby**

**Let them say what they will**

**Will your tongue wag so much**

**When I send you the bill?**

Then we get the huge climax as Robert gives us several "Oh" moments as Page stabs at his guitar and plays some vicious licks in the process, Bonham keeps building and building until everything comes to a sudden halt as Jimmy's guitar rings out and the song fades into the night.

Six minutes and twenty-six seconds of pure Led Zeppelin bliss. Jake Holmes may have come up with the initial seed for this song, but it was Led Zeppelin who took those seeds and produced a beautiful rose. It was an amazing statement on their debut album and over the course of their career; this was one of the songs that defined the band.

They played this live on every tour from the very beginning until the first two weeks of the 1975 tour, when it was dropped because Page had injured a finger and he couldn't properly play this piece. Once the digit was healed, the song

returned to the set on 3 February in the fabled Madison Square Garden in New York City.

From 1977 on, they dropped "Dazed" from the set, but Page still employed the violin bow solo. To describe the many different versions that "Dazed" took on in the live settings would be an impossible task. Plant would often add lyrics from other songs like "Woodstock" or "San Francisco" and Page/Bonham/Jones would get into jams, sometimes very lengthy jams, that would produce riffs and ideas that later became "The Crunge" and "Walter's Walk."

"Dazed And Confused" was an **EPIC** in every sense of the word and on the stage it grew to length's that would be unimaginable by today's standards. The version on "The Song Remains The Same" soundtrack was 26:53 and that's not even close to being the longest version they played.

And whilst I can certainly appreciate the great jams that grew out of this song, and as a guitarist can most definitely understand the desire to get lost in the music and let it take you to destinations unknown... I stand adamantly by my statement that the live versions of this were just too damn long.

To give an example of where I am coming from in my view of this song on the live stage, let me just say that I am a huge fan of Randy Rhoads. Now I know there may be some Zeppelin fans that aren't fans of Randy but that would probably be because they just don't care for Ozzy. Nevertheless, Randy was a phenomenal talent and a truly wonderful guitarist. In Ozzy's live show Randy would take a solo during "Suicide Solution" and that solo would cover a **LOT** of ground... from rock, to metal, to melodic and beautiful, to outright shredding at the end and he would do all of this in under three minutes... typically it was just over two minutes.

The point being, Randy - and Ozzy - understood that playing actual **SONGS** was more important than showing off as soloist, and this is why they did things the way they did; the important part was the band and playing the songs on their albums.

And when I look through the massive Zeppelin catalog and see how many songs were never played live, or how many songs

were played live only for one tour or less, it just pains me to see these overly long pieces when so many other great songs could have been played instead.

I also know the argument that some will make about the jams and how could I be against something so spontaneous? And I do get that argument, but I would counter that with this; instead of getting a long jam that would include a small sampling of "Walter's Walk," wouldn't you have rather heard a 10 minute version of "Dazed," as well as "Immigrant Song," "When The Levee Breaks," "Walter's Walk," "Out On The Tiles," "Hey Hey What Can I Do" "Four Sticks" and "The Rover?" How cool would some of their later tours have been with those songs included instead of the near 30 minute versions of "Dazed" or 25+ minute versions of "Moby Dick?"

And those are just a few examples... believe me, there are many other songs they never played live that could have been added in the 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977 and 1980 tours as well as the Copenhagen and Knebworth shows in 1979. If I am alone in this thought, then so be it, but I have to believe there are others who would agree.

As mentioned earlier, the violin bow became a Page trademark and Jimmy used it during tours with The Firm when he brought it out for "The Chase." During the Outrider Tour he again used it for "The Chase" and played the entire last section of "Dazed & Confused," from the ripping guitar solo on.

In 2007, when the remaining members reunited with Jason Bonham at the O2, they played a beautiful version of "Dazed..." as Robert said: "There are certain songs that have to be there... and uh, and this is one of them." That version was much shorter than the ones they played in the 1970's and was much more fitting in my opinion.

My favorite versions of this song live are the very early ones; there was just something magical about seeing Jimmy playing his Dragon Telecaster and keeping this song in the 10-12 minute range. I absolutely love the first version on "BBC Sessions" which was, obviously, the shorter of the two versions, in this case, some 12 minutes shorter than the second version on disc two.

One thing that cannot be denied, whether you agree with me or not, is that Led Zeppelin took this song to heights that nobody else could have dreamed of. Watching The Yardbirds on YouTube play this is a bit frustrating; you really miss Plant's amazing vocal, Jonsey's impeccable and adventurous bass and Bonham's thunderous drumming. And in watching them, I really get the sense of just how special and precious Led Zeppelin was.

Don't take that wrong, it's not like I've never fully appreciated Zeppelin, rather, I just became so accustomed to hearing their songs played to perfection that seeing another band play one of their songs - even a band with Page in it - just left me wanting more.

The magic that was Robert Plant, John Paul Jones, John Bonham and Jimmy Page was something that we may never see again. They truly were a special group of musicians who produced some of rock's most epic moments.

Until the next time,

Jeff