



Stairway to Heaven: Led Zeppelin Uncensored

By Richard Cole

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No one knew Led Zeppelin like Richard Cole. The band's tour manager for more than a decade, Cole was there when they burst onto the music scene, achieved cult status, cut platinum records, and transformed popular music. Second only to the Beatles in sales for years, Led Zeppelin was rock's premier group. But unlike the boys from Liverpool, the excitement of this band's music was matched by the fever pitch of their antics on and off the stage....

In hotel rooms and stadiums, in a customized private Boeing 707 jet and country estates, Richard Cole saw it all -- and here he tells it all in this close-up, down-and-dirty, no-holds-barred account that records the highs, the lows, and the occasional in-betweens. This revised edition brings fans up to date on the band members' lives and careers, which may be a little quieter now, but their songs remain the same.

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Stairway to Heaven: Led Zeppelin Uncensored By Richard Cole Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Cole, tour manager to maestros of metal music Led Zeppelin throughout the band's 12-year existence, collaborates with Trubo, a syndicated journalist, on this sordid tell-all. Alcohol, cocaine and heroin abuse, shameless groupies and perverse pranks figure largely in the saga. Cole boasts of his and the band's phenomenal appetites for liquor, drugs and sex while denouncing those who say Led Zeppelin harmed the international legions of teenage girls who routinely sought rock-star notches in their bedposts. He clearly enjoyed the company of drummer John Bonham, who died of alcohol-related causes in 1980; many trashy tales of "Bonzo's" booze-soaked shenanigans appear here. Conversely, guitar virtuoso Jimmy Page, who never confided details of his occult interests, remains an enigma. Vocalist Robert Plant is generally portrayed as hostile and arrogant, and bassist John Paul Jones receives the least mention, perhaps due to his down-to-earth, less excessive behavior. Fans who don't mind a roadie's braggadocio and sexism will find many an explicit anecdote in these pages. Photos not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

Before Motley Crue, Metallica, Guns 'n Roses, and every other pretender to the heavy metal throne, there was Led Zeppelin, archetypal progenitors of all headbangers. Cole, their tour manager-cum-bodyguard, paramour procurer, and ace troubleshooter for 12 years, is uniquely qualified to guide us through the multifarious sexual, narcotic, alcoholic, and material excesses for which he and the band became legendary. Uncensored is the operative word as Cole recalls one anecdotal tale of surfeit and decadence after another, touching upon the band's propensity for very young teenage girls, wanton destruction of hotel property, and insatiable capacity for alcohol, cocaine, and heroin. Amazingly, all these tales are told in a young-rock-gods-will-be-boys demeanor. Many of the tales, however, can be found in Stephen Davis's Hammer of the Gods: The Led Zeppelin Saga (LJ 6/15/85). To his credit, Cole also attempts to celebrate the band's innumerable musical accomplishments. For large music collections.

-Barry X. Miller, Austin P.L., Tex.

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From Kirkus Reviews

Tell-all journal of the hedonism, profligacy, and perversity of the Seventies supergroup that went down in flames. Led Zeppelin was assembled by former Yardbirds guitarist Jimmy Page; 14 months after their first performance, they had a recording contract with Atlantic, were playing 20,000 seat arenas, and had been offered a million dollars for a single performance. Cole (here ably assisted by journalist Trubo) was the group's tour manager and road companion for 12 years. What happens when four men, some not yet of majority, become rich as Croesus in 20 months, have more women than imaginable throwing themselves at their feet, and unlimited alcohol, drugs, and servants as well? Cole is astoundingly clear on the details--offhandedly honest as he is about his own gargantuan appetite for heroin and booze--and lays out the road life with all the real nitty-gritty, including the 14-year-olds Page craved, room demolitions, cross-dressing, and the infamous fornication-by-fish episode. The inevitable center of gravity of Cole's saga is the tragedy of John ``Bonzo'' Bonham, the band's drummer, dead of alcohol overdose at age 32. Bonham--a monster with his addiction fully blown, his short life drowning in a sea of alcohol--is by turns grandiose, despairing, manipulative, passionate, violent. Invited backstage to a Ten Years After Concert, he throws orange juice on Alvin Lee--the most respected guitarist of his generation--as Lee performs, then staggers on stage and rips his clothes off, defecates in women's handbags and shoes, and passes out in the gutter outside his \$500 hotel room. And everywhere around him are the enablers, feeding him more alcohol, cocaine, heroin. Lacks the

depth of Stephen Davis's Hammer of the Gods (1985) but dishes up the real dirt as only an insider's report can. (Photographs--not seen.) -- *Copyright ©1992, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Deborah Green:

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