

DEADLINE



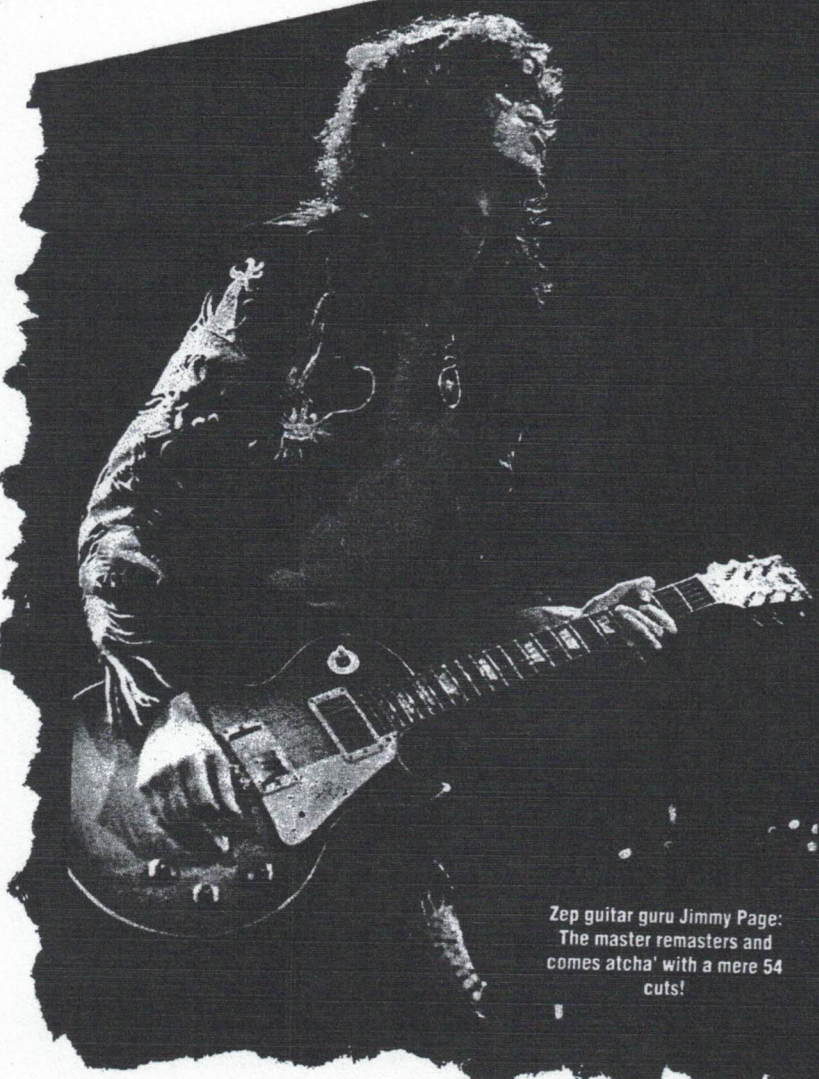
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- ★ = MORBID
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PAGE BOYS!



Zep guitar guru Jimmy Page: The master remasters and comes atcha' with a mere 54 cuts!

LED ZEPPELIN
Led Zeppelin
Atlantic 7567821441

A BOX around the ears that should keep every Led Zeppelin fanatic happy for years to come... Or just another marketing ploy to pump out this legendary band's back catalogue another time and clean up again? After all, it only seems like a year since the majority of the music presented here was dished up on CD. Is an action replay really necessary so soon? Apparently, Zep's guitar guru Jimmy Page thought so, being justifiably miffed that the band on CD sounded sub standard due to the quality of the tapes that were used. Page returned to the record company vaults and emerged with the original masters grasped firmly in his creative claw.

After months of work remastering these originals, 'Led Zeppelin', a 54-track tribute to the greatest Heavy Metal band of all-time, is ready to roll.

Only four songs here have never been officially released in this country before, the rest is made up of songs that span the band's dynamic decade, from 1969 to 1979. So what's the big deal?

For one, 'Led Zeppelin' sounds positively brilliant! Every detail has been lovingly restored to material that has, over the years, become muddled with distorted remixing. The temptation to simply make this a 'greatest hits' package has also been wisely avoided. Instead, the shifting musical moods of the band, in no chronological order, are allowed to blend into one another to create a totally new dimension to the Led Zeppelin listening experience. The result is a package that comes across sounding as fresh, vital and electrifying as when these sessions were first released. It kicks off with 'Whole Lotta Love' from 'Led Zeppelin II' and grinds to a halt with 'All My Love' from 'In Through The Out Door'. In between are wedged such prime Zeppelin classics as 'Communication Breakdown', 'Trampled Under Foot', 'Stairway To Heaven' and 'Kashmir', a track from their 'Physical Graffiti' album that was one of the band's finest moments. It's remastered inclusion here finds the song honed to perfection with Page's almost mandalic guitar melody weaving an even richer tapestry of sound.

Reason enough to invest your life savings in this essential collection.

KID KARRION ★★★★★

SCORPIONS
Crazy World
Vertigo 898408

OH THE mysteries and machinations within musical membranes. The Scorpions have spent the past 15 years, or so, bemoaning their link with producer Dieter Dierks, darkly claiming that he was responsible for holding back their progress - a statement clearly at odds with the fivesome's tremendous success with DD. The fact that they now stand as one of the biggest Hard Rock bands in the world is due in no small measure to Dierks.

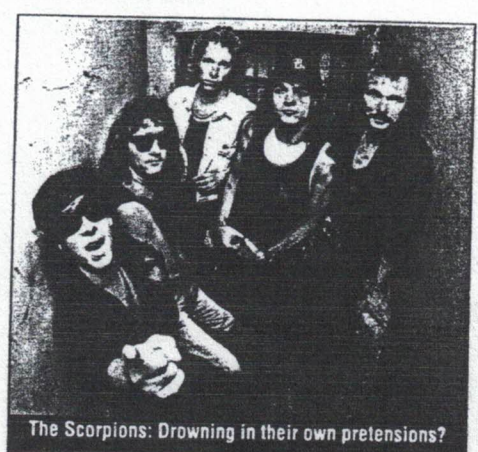
All of which is entirely relevant to 'Crazy World', because this is the first Scorpions LP since 'Lonesome Crow' in 1972 (their debut) to be recorded without Dierks... And it shows. Produced by Keith Olsen

(Whitesnake, Ozzy, Magnum), 'Crazy World' is tired, lame and sorely lacking in quality material. Indeed, only the feisty 'Lust Of Love' and the blowtorch tango of 'Kicks After Six' enliven an album full of tawdry balladry ('To Be With You In Heaven' and 'Send Me An Angel' are possibly the worst songs this band have ever cut), wastefully disengaged Rockers and monochrome social statements.

I will certainly admit that the guitars of Matthias and Rudy Schenker are essential in their fury and thankfully confidently loud in the mix, but what good is this when the material is so painfully poor?

As a longstanding Scorpions fanatic it pains me to say it, but without Dierks' guiding hands on the tiller, the Scorpions simply drown in their own pretensions. Come back Dieter!

MALCOLM DOME ★1/2



The Scorpions: Drowning in their own pretensions?

ROBERT JOHN/VEECKE