

MUSIC

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THE SONGS REMAIN THE SAME

Zepparella insists that it's not your ordinary Zeppelin tribute band

BY DAN THOMAS

LAKE TAHOE ACTION

They're four chicks, they play Zeppelin — maybe the epitome of cock rock — and yet they insist they're not exactly a tribute band.

Feeling confused — or, perhaps, dazed? Zepparella's drummer sees a difference between her band and a tribute act.

"I think that with the Zeppelin music, what separates all the bands is that you

Zepparella

WHAT: an all female Led Zeppelin tribute
WHERE: MontBleu Casino Resort and Spa
WHEN: 9 p.m., Saturday, March 22
 (doors at 8)
TICKETS: \$20 tickets.us.at/Tribune

can't play the music well if you don't have a connection between the players," said Clementine, who goes by only one name. "So when you go to see any Zeppelin band, if they're playing the song the way it is on the record, it's going to suck."

She acknowledged that Zepparella is technically a tribute band. But the foursome is paying tribute to Zeppelin's synergy at least as much as its music.

"It was like these four people who were in this groove onstage together," she said. "If that's not there, you might as well just sit at home and listen to the greatest recordings ever recorded."

Clementine also cleared up the other major misconception about her band, which plays Saturday, March 22, at the MontBleu: It's Zepparella, like "Barbarella" (the comic book and Jane Fonda movie), not Cinderella (the fairy tale or hair metal band).

The name is indicative of another difference between Zepparella and other tribute acts. While it owes its sound to Zeppelin, Clementine said she didn't want to immerse the group in all "the stuff" that goes along with tribute acts and

sought another source for visual information.

"When I started the band, I was thinking about how I wanted it to look, and a big thing is I didn't want it to be a tribute band. I wanted to divert attention away from the tribute model," she said. "I love the movie 'Barbarella.' I love the costumes. I love Jane Fonda. I love the sets."

It clicked — but didn't stick. The name, however, did.

Clementine made it clear that she's not bagging on the concept of tribute bands: In fact, she played in the tribute band AC/DCShe with another member of Zepparella, guitarist Gretchen Menn — Agnes Young to her Phyllis Rudd.

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"I'm not knocking it," Clementine said. "I'd been in a band like that. I didn't want to be in another band like that."

But she had high praises for Lez Zeppelin and tributes drawing similar inspiration.

"I've heard that they're great and I just think it's so fucking cool that women are out there doing this stuff.

"How can you not dig it?"

Clementine also played with Zepparella bassist Nila Minnerock in the metal band Bottom. Bay Area actress Anna Kristina rounds

out the foursome on vocals. Notice there's no one on mellotron, theremin or playing the guitar with a bow — so while the four members of Zepparella venture throughout Zeppelin's catalogue, they avoid some of the synth-intensive numbers (so no "Tangerine" for Clementine).

Zepparella pretty much always plays "Whole Lotta Love," and counts "Dazed and Confused" and "In My Time of Dying," except the latter is 14 minutes long.

Clementine called "Presence" her favorite Zeppelin album as far as drumming goes, but is still working her way up to "Achilles' Last

Stand," which she called "the monster of all monsters."

And a Tahoe show is enough of a monster. Clementine wore a meter that showed her she burned 1,200 to 1,500 calories on drums — without adding in Tahoe's elevation.

"That's a lot for sitting down."

The thin air above 6,200 feet makes drumming even more of a marathon — especially if you're trying to follow in John Bonham's footsteps. Still, it's worth the workout.

"We love it," she said. "It's always so much fun. It's beautiful. People are nice, and they're ready to party."

PHOTO BY DAN THOMAS