



February 6, 2008

## ZEPPELIN REBORN



courtesy photo

Zepparella is: Bassist Nila Minner, drummer Clementine, guitarist Gretchen Menn and singer Anna Kristina.

# Zepparella to make triumphant return to Cottage Grove

*Girl rockers pledge nothing but their heavy-metal best*

BY JON STINNETT  
The Cottage Grove Sentinel

Having been born in 1980, nine months before the demise of drum wizard John Bonham and, ultimately, Led Zeppelin, I count myself among the many who lament never having seen the band's original lineup on stage. But I don't worry. Zepparella is coming.

One year ago, almost to the day, I balked at the thought of four women channeling Zeppelin live. Reluctantly, I trudged to the Axe & Fiddle to witness the trainwreck. Wrong again.

Guitarist Gretchen Menn filled the expectant silence with a flawless Jimmy Page ala "Heartbreaker."

Anna Kristina's vocals turned high and icy to open "Immigrant Song."

Nila Minner's bass opened "Dazed and Confused" with eerie thump, Clementine's drums pulsed behind it all, and the band bled through "Since I've Been Loving You."

The Axe & Fiddle shook. Eardrums

ached, and the place went wild. This Saturday, Feb. 9, Zepparella returns for round two, and they can't wait to get after us.

"Oregon is so beautiful anyway," Clementine said. "The people are so nice, and Cottage Grove is a special place. We always remember certain crowds, and we're so excited to come back."

The past few years have witnessed a proliferation of tribute bands, many featuring a gimmicky twist to the all-out rock of the previous generation. Mini-Kiss and the Iron Maidens offer a pint-sized Gene Simmons and feminine "Run to the Hills," respectively. Zepparella, though, eschews the tribute band label as forcefully as they defend their right to rock the old-fashioned way, with a vicious onstage incarnation of the most famous heavy metal band of all time. The band offers its own musical vision to the classics they lovingly render, adding depth to their version of things while improvising enough to turn songs like "Whole Lotta Love" into what Clementine calls a "complete crap shoot."

"It usually happens in the van or backstage," she said. "One of us will figure out a new way to go into the song and we'll all agree on it. Then onstage I'll forget to use that drumbeat or something, and something completely unexpected will happen."

The resultant twist makes Zepparella a musical force with which to be reckoned,

as well as a powerhouse live act. Note one of their performance pulls the audience in close, each resultant guitar squeal and kick drum groove turning up the energy as the crowd bumps into itself, the older generation rocking like it's 1975, the younger generation like they never have before.

Visitors to the Zepparella experience can count on hearing their favorites, though they'd be best not to expect any of Zeppelin's acoustic classics.

"During a 90-minute set, it's hard to justify taking the crowd to that quieter place," Clementine said. "We're all still so high on the hard rock set, and the audience loves it, so we stay with it."

The band counts "Dazed and Confused" among its personal favorites, in addition to songs like "Trampled Underfoot" and "Lemon Song," a song in whose dirty Motown groove Clementine revels. And they simply adore "In My Time of Dying." But anything could happen.

"We're really excited to be back and to have a live album with us," Clementine said. "We only record live, because we don't see the need to re-record the best recordings of all time. But to have a live album for fans to experience along with the show itself is just great."

Zepparella's musical extravaganza begins at the Axe & Fiddle at 8:30 p.m. Tickets can be had for \$10.

rec-  
ough  
r en-  
Wil-  
ottles  
orting  
bar-  
rains  
, and  
fash-  
o the

isn't  
: It's  
keep-  
up as

pport  
vities  
I Sad-  
d it.

about  
> 'use  
I Mc-  
body

avail-  
bsite,  
n or

reat,"  
isn't

le,