

***Becoming Led Zeppelin* - Good Times Bad Times**



The band performed at Bath Festival of Blues in 1969 just as their success skyrocketed. Source: Sony Pictures

Nearly 60 years after Led Zeppelin's formation, the iconic opening riff of *Good Times Bad Times* crashed into the cinema, the moment fans of the world's [third best-selling band](#) of all time have waited decades for.

Becoming Led Zeppelin weaves together footage of the band's earliest performances and rare original interviews with singer Robert Plant, bassist John Paul Jones and guitarist Jimmy Page, who have closely guarded the band's film rights for decades.

Director Bernard MacMahon won the elusive rights to a Led Zeppelin documentary after being tested by Jimmy Page, who invited MacMahon to the rural village of Pangbourne - the birthplace of Led Zeppelin. Page later revealed in an interview with The Guardian that if MacMahon declined the invitation, [he would have lost the rights completely](#). Thankfully for fans, MacMahon agreed and *Becoming Led Zeppelin* began to take shape.

The film impressively squeezes over two years of the band's history into just over two hours, all the way from early audiences cringing at Plant's screeching vocals to the band receiving a deafening standing ovation just one year later.

For the first time, Zeppelin's members guide listeners through the inspirations behind their songs, from Little Richard to 60s blues, allowing the audience to experience each track in full with a newfound understanding and respect.

In an interview with the *Rolling Stone*, MacMahon explained that “Led Zeppelin songs defy cutting. They’ve got beginnings, middles and ends, so if you start cutting them, you really remove a lot of their power.”

But don’t expect the film to be a blockbuster biopic like *Bohemian Rhapsody* or *Rocket Man*. As a fan, I can say that the documentary is clearly targeted to those who know and love Led Zeppelin well.

The film concludes with Zeppelin bowing to a deafening crowd, cutting the band’s career short just after the release of their second album. So whilst MacMahon stays true to the film’s title by focusing on the ‘becomings’ of Led Zeppelin, there is something deeply unsatisfying about neglecting the band’s later hits.

Zeppelin fanatics waiting to experience *Immigrant Song*, *Black Dog*, or even *Stairway to Heaven*, will have to wait to see if MacMahon will follow the rest of the band’s explosive career in a sequel.

Additionally, MacMahon’s lack of exploration into the band’s major controversies, most notably Jimmy Page’s [relationship with a 14-year-old girl](#) during the band’s peak, gives the sense that he did not want to jeopardise his chance to direct and write the band’s only official film.

In fear of causing band members to walk out of interviews, MacMahon’s dismissal of the band’s ‘bad times’ left me feeling as though I watched a 137 minute long piece of PR designed to keep surviving band members comfortable.

Still, for fans that want to rock out to some, not all, of the band’s best songs with a newfound understanding of their history, *Becoming Led Zeppelin* is an unmissable revelation into the makings of one of the world’s most iconic bands.

Becoming Led Zeppelin is out in cinemas across the UK from Friday 7 February.