

Aggielife

By Margaret Claughton
THE BATTALION

David Winder
THE BATTALION

Jimmy Page and Robert Plant
No Quarter
Atlantic Records
*** 1/2 (out of five)

Robert Plant can still work magic with his dynamic voice. Jimmy Page can still play the guitar as if he invented it. It's not Led Zeppelin but on the duo's new album "No Quarter" they prove that they can still rock'n'roll.

Part-acoustic, part-electric, "No Quarter" includes 11 Zeppelin songs along with three new ones. European folk instruments, Arabic influences and an Egyptian ensemble also make their way onto the record.

New Unleaded versions of "Nobody's Fault But Mine" and "Galileo" rival the originals. The slower pace of the music lends it well to Plant's vocals.

Egypt native Najma Akhtar's voice blends perfectly with Plant in an extraordinary version of "The Well of Evermore."

While not as good as the original, the album does offer a decent version of "Since I've Been Loving You."

Thankfully Page and Plant choose to remake one Zeppelin classic, "Kashmir." An English orchestra helps to enliven Page's guitar but the song still lacks something. The guys were smart not to cover songs like "Hairway to Heaven" and "Babe in Gonna Leave You."

New songs "City Don't Cry" and "Wonderful One" sound as if they could have been recorded during Led Zeppelin's heyday. Written along with "Yallah," the new songs come from time spent in Morocco. Arabian drums, ouds, nays and fiddles are prevalent throughout.

The duo also went to Wales to record "Nobody's Fault But Mine" and the title song "No Quarter." The rhythm section of



Plant's "Fate of Nations" tour gives the songs a folksy feel by using mandolins and banjos.

New versions of "Thank You" and "Friends" lag behind the originals because the back-up band seems to be playing a slower tempo than Page's lead. It might have been done this way on purpose but it still gives the songs an awkward sound.

The good news is Page and Plant are back together after 14 years apart. "No Quarter" was not exactly worth the wait, but they could have done much worse.

Eagles, Zeppelin veterans return to bring '70s rock into the '90s

BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE THEY'VE ROCK'N'ROLLED



Led Zeppelin's Robert Plant and Jimmy Page

Eagles
"Hell Freezes Over"
Geffen Records
***** (out of five)

They have a style that just can't die. A timeless soothing form of music. Although they're no spring chickens, the Eagles have once again produced an album with classic hit potential.

Some long-time Eagles fans may be wary of the band's new album, "Hell Freezes Over," thinking it will be a disappointment or the old guys just won't have it anymore. But not only do they still have it, they've managed to improve it.

"Hell Freezes Over" is an album recorded during the Eagles' live MTV performance taped on April 25 and 26. Four brand new songs introduce the album but the 11 others are old favorites plucked from the archives to be remade.

The fact that the band released so many older songs symbolically seals their new pact to peacefully coexist once again.

But these remakes are not only symbolic. The subtle differences in each of the old songs are indicative of the band's growth over the years.

Their talent and finesse has improved with time and this is indicated in the top quality performance delivered on the songs that are old hat to the band.

"Hotel California" is one such revitalized song. An ethnic guitar intro precedes the song and lingers throughout its entirety, giving new depth to an old familiar melody.

"Tequila Sunrise" and "Wasted Time" also sound different. But the changes are not drastic and they almost make the songs seem more polished.

The manner in which the Eagles have remade their music does not irritate fans of the older versions. They are not the type of remakes that make listeners stumble as they try to sing along with their old favorites. These oldies are slightly beefed up and refreshingly different, but not entirely overhauled.

Some of the band members joke between songs about their break up and make repeated references to their regrouping.

Don Henley states "For the record, we never broke up. We just took a 14-year



vacation."

The vocals on the album are shared equally, making it seem like a group effort once again. The only musical remnant of the break up is Henley's solo "New York Minute." Otherwise the band seems to ease back into the group smoothly and comfortably.

The four new songs that begin the album show the band's steadfast ability to create together.

"Love Will Keep Us Alive" is a slow rock



Joe Walsh, Timothy B. Schmit, Don Henley, Don Felder and Glenn Frey of The Eagles.

song with hard-hitting lyrics, typical of Eagles' style. Timothy B. Schmit's unique voice launches the song into Eagles history as it did in the 1979 hit "I Can't Tell You Why."

Two of the other new songs, "Get Over It" and "Learn To Be Still," are also rock-oriented, while the fourth, "The Girl From Yesterday" leans to the country side.

Old they may be, but tired-out they are not. The Eagles live on with their new album and will hopefully continue to for many years to come.

Laserdisc quality stepping movies into the future

Timm Doolen
SPECIAL TO THE BATTALION

Do you remember when you first heard about a compact disc player in the '80s? Many people thought it would always be replaced by cassette, while others heralded it as the coming of a new age in audio technology.

Ten years later, teenagers don't even know what albums are, as the CD format dominates the consumer audio market.

Yet almost the equivalent in the video realm, laserdisc, which was first commercially introduced in 1978, seven years before compact disc, has not seen such popularity.

What is the reason for the radically different fates of two technologies that are almost identical?

Simply stated, it's a combination of

price, availability, marketing and market penetration.

Nevertheless, Blockbuster Video will soon carry laserdiscs for rent and the local Camelot Music store, one of the few places to purchase laserdiscs in Bryan-College Station, has reported a rapid increase in sales in recent months.

So will laserdisc be the format of the future, or will it be forgotten like the vinyl LP?

First let's look at what it is.

Is laserdisc an advantage?

"As far as the video portion, VHS is 240 lines of resolution, and laser is 420 to 440 lines," said Charles Riddell, a salesman at Audio Video.

"As far as the audio, it's the same as a CD — it's the same type of format," he said.

In fact almost all laserdisc players will play CDs.

Several recent laserdisc releases, such as "Jurassic Park" include THX sound, the same sound quality used in theaters.

Another advantage of laserdisc is that, like compact disc, it is a non-linear medium. You can go anywhere on the side of the disc in seconds without having to rewind or fast-forward.

Also like CD, laserdiscs have an unlimited lifespan. Videotapes wear out over time, but the non-contact digital technology of laserdisc allows the 500th play of a movie to be as clear as the first play.

Among the disadvantages of laserdiscs: the limitation of 60 minutes of material per side, requiring disc flips for most movies; the relative higher cost of both the hardware and software; the in-

ability to record onto laserdiscs; and the fact that videotape is already such an established format.

Al Powell, host of KAMU-FM's weekly audio-video show "Tech Talk," said, "Most people don't care. Most people are happy with VHS and the quality of picture, sounds, cost and convenience of video tape."

But a laserdisc player should be considered an addition to, not substitution for, a VCR.

"LD is not a replacement for VHS," Powell said. "If you're a movie enthusiast, videotape is the cake and LD is the icing."

Are players affordable?

Laserdisc players cost more than VCRs, but a good, bottom-of-the-line player can be found for around \$300, about the same price as a good, four-head hi-fi stereo VCR. And the most expensive laserdisc player will deliver better picture and sound than the most expensive VHS system.

Riddell said that because of dramatic price decreases in the past year, and increased availability of software, he expects sales of laserdisc players to rise.

"We sell about two or three units a month," Riddell said. "The majority of those are sold to students."

Steven Casas, a sophomore accounting major from Pasadena, is one A&M student who has taken the plunge.

"I remodeled my room and I wanted to set up a home theater system," he said.

He compared laserdisc to VHS and was pleased with the picture and sound quality enough to make the investment.

"It's a worthy investment for people who want more," Casas said. "It's nice for electronics buffs as well."

Is the software available?

"A lot of people have asked about (laserdiscs)," said Danielle Bowdich, assistant manager at Blockbuster Video, which will begin carrying laserdiscs for rent in a few weeks.

Sandy McNeese, an assistant manager at Camelot Music, said laserdisc sales have been on a rapid increase over the past months.

"I've been here under a year and it's increased in the last six months or so," she said.

"Jurassic Park" is their best seller so far, selling 20 to 30 copies in just the first three days. She said they sell two or three copies per month of the limited edition Star Wars Trilogy box set, which consists of all three Star Wars movies presented in the wide screen format, with the original trailers, supplementary interviews, and a book. The set sells for \$250.

"I think laserdisc got off to a slow start, but I think it's going to keep going really well."

Casas said one of the reasons to get into the format is because of the special editions of movies that are released.

Laserdiscs have extra audio tracks sometimes used for running commentaries on the movie by filmmakers or film historians. Also, laserdiscs often include theatrical trailers, "making of" features and interviews with filmmakers and cast members.

The future of laserdisc

"Laserdiscs are not expensive to press, if you do a lot of them," Powell said.

With more market penetration, the

cost of both the discs and the players could continue to decrease.

But while laserdisc currently represents the top consumer video format, future developments, such as high-definition television (HDTV) and CD video, which puts a movie on a 5-inch CD as opposed to the 12-inch laserdisc, threaten to replace laserdisc, Powell said.

"Eventually they'll come out with a better medium," Casas said. However, right now laserdisc is the best format to "go beyond the limits," in Casas' words.

Like any consumer electronics, anything can be obsolete within a few years, but for movie buffs who want the ultimate viewing experience, laserdisc is the medium of choice.

"A laserdisc is just like watching it in the theater," Casas said.

Disc quality gives in-depth look to 'She's Gotta Have It'

Timm Doolen
SPECIAL TO THE BATTALION

She's Gotta Have It (1986)
Starring Spike Lee and Tracy Camila Johns
Directed by Spike Lee
Unrated
Voyager (released 1994)

Spike Lee's first film, "She's Gotta Have It," worked so well in part because it was something we hadn't seen before — an intelligent movie about African-Americans in which the characters are interesting and, more importantly, racial issues are not the focus.

The films centers around the love life of Nola Darling (Tracy Camila Johns), who juggles three men: the fast-talking Mars Blackmon (Spike Lee), the self-absorbed Greer Childs (John Canada Terrell), and the down-to-earth Jamie Overstreet (Tommy Redmond Hicks).

All three men know about the others' involvement with Nola, and despite their unhappiness with the competition, none of them can convince Nola to dump the other two guys.

She eventually invites all three to a humorous Thanksgiving dinner, and later must choose between her care-free lifestyle and a man she really cares about.

The Voyager company has done justice to this modest film on laserdisc. The quality of the video and audio rarely expose the fact that

this movie was made on a budget of less than \$30,000.

But the best reason to buy this laserdisc, especially if you are a fan of Spike Lee, is for the wealth of extras that accompany the movie.

These extras include: restored footage which originally earned the movie an X rating; a deleted scene; a music video; outtakes showing how Lee juggled directing and acting; the theatrical trailer; two Nike commercials directed by Lee featuring Michael Jordan and character Mars Blackmon from the movie; a plethora of still photographs which provide looks behind the scenes; and excerpts from Lee's journals and notebooks.

Also a great extra is the running commentary on the alternate audio track of the film, featuring Lee, cinematographer Ernest Dickerson, sound designer Barry Brown and production supervisor Monty Ross.

Much of the discussion concerns how they made a feature film on such a low budget, including telling some tricks on how they cut corners, and exposing some of the flaws in the movie due to budget constraints.

This is not Lee's best movie, yet far from his worst. He handled comedy and relationships between characters in "She's Gotta Have It" that he hasn't equaled since.

This film was a precursor of the great things that have since come, and for a mere \$50, is worth the unique look behind the scenes.



Tim Moog / THE BATTALION

The laserdisc release of Spike Lee's 'She's Gotta Have It.'