ROBERT PLANT
Now and Zen.
Worcester Centrum, October 30.

By ALFRED ARMENDARIZ

IT WAS ALMOST LIKE BEING BACK in 1975. Almost.

The two men responsible for putting Led Zeppelin on top of the rock world brought their solo tours to the Worcester Centrum, and both on the same weekend. This Sunday, just 24 hours after Jimmy Page played his first-ever solo show at Great Woods, the rocker began his concert with a thundering rendition of "Communication Breakdown" from Zeppelin's debut record. Though recent Plant-Page reunions have given Zeppelin fans a lot to cheer about, Plant showed in his concert Sunday that he can still electrify a crowd, with or without Jimmy Page.

Robert Plant and his quintet of musicians performed a tight, 90 minute set that featured songs from Plant's days with Zeppelin, his solo work, and a couple of American Blues classics. The staging included an elaborate lighting setup and a revolving circular screen on which special effects footage was shown. Unlike many rock shows today, however, the special effects did not overshadow the musicians - Plant and Co. skillfully used the effects to build excitement throughout the show.

The first songs of the night highlighted Plant's solo work and included a powerful rendition of "B'illy's Revenge" from his latest album Now and Zen. The band, which included Phil Johnson on keyboards, Phil Scragg on bass, and guitarist Boyle, opened as much at home playing the Zeppelin songs as the songs they co-wrote and recorded with Plant on Now and Zen. Plant received a crazed ovation from the audience when he emerged for the second half wearing a Jimmy Page concert shirt. The rocker then performed four more songs and closed the show with a thundering rendition of "Communication Breakdown" from Zeppelin's debut record. Though recent Plant-Page reunions have given Zeppelin fans a lot to cheer about, Plant showed in his concert Sunday that he can still electrify a crowd, with or without Jimmy Page.

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