

STEREO

THE Jimi Hendrix Experience



Are you experienced?

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?



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Jimi Hendrix
EXPERIENCE



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By February 1967 the first Experience record was a hit and London's *New Musical Express* reported that a follow-up single was forthcoming in March "to coincide with the issue of Jimi's first LP, *Are You Experienced?*" When the title was unveiled, Jimi hastened to add, "There's nothing wrong with that!"

"When we go into the studio we never rehearse anything," said Mitch, "we never knew what we were going to do in advance. When it came to rhythmic structure, everything was left up to me and Noel. Jimi would say to Noel, 'This is the way the song goes, these are the notes that are available, but around that structure you can play anything you want.'"

"The first sessions we did, I was using Chandler's bass," said Noel, "it was a big Gibson. Then I got a Fender Jazz bass which I used forever. On a lot of the stuff I did percussion, a tambourine or something, Mitch might play maracas, but it was always Mitch and I who did the percussions."

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Jimi Hendrix left his Seattle hometown to join the army in May 1961. A parachute jump injury in Kentucky got him honourably discharged in July 1962. He went to Nashville and was hired as guitarist in the back-up band for All-Star shows of touring R&B greats. Jimi criss-crossed America hundreds of times over the next three years. "I used to join a group and quit them so fast," he said, "I had these ideas and sounds in my brain, and playing other people's music all the time was hurting me. The first real group I got together on my own was back in Greenwich Village, around 1966. I changed my name to Jimmy James and called the group the Blue Flames. I had this girlfriend from England, she told Chas Chandler of *The Animals* about me, *The Animals* were playing in Central Park. So he came down where we were gigging and heard me and asked would I like to come over to England."

"I was half convinced to sign him up before I even heard him play", Chas said. "We talked in a restaurant before he played. I remember thinking this cat's wild enough to upset more people than Jagger! When he did *Hey Joe*, a number I was planning to record as my first independent venture, that clinched it. I saw Jimi as the governor rebel of all time. I mean he may be nice as ninenpence as a bloke, but here was a guy who was going to turn on all the chicks, crucify every blues guitarist in the world. He wanted to use a wider idiom than blues, and he was being drawn towards Bob Dylan-type fantasy, so we could give him a chance to write his own songs."

"So we came to England," Jimi continues, "Chas had a lot of phone numbers. It was very hard to find the right sidemen, we succeeded with Mitch Mitchell, on drums, and Noel Redding, on bass. Mitch had just

quit a group, he's the best out of about twenty drummers we heard. Noel came down with a guitar and we asked him if he'd like to play bass. We formed the group in October. We set out to be a trio. I was thinking of the smallest pieces possible with the hardest impact. Our music is improvisation, the style was formed here in England."

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"Everything in the early days was recorded four-track," recalls Eddie Kramer, "and then we had to mix

that down to another four track machine. So you had eight tracks, but you didn't really have eight tracks - you really only had six. The drums were recorded with the bass across two tracks... one track for rhythm guitar, and then another track for lead guitar. Then you'd bounce all that into stereo on two tracks of another four-track recorder. So that gives you two more tracks... everything had to be perfect right then and there."

"We'd do anything we could think of just for the fun of it," said Chas, "any daft idea that came along, we'd try it."

"Despite the presence of a fair amount of experimentation in the studio," Mitch noted, "Are You Experienced? was the live Experience on record... There were a few we didn't do live, such as *Remember* and *May This Be Love*, because in all honesty they were album fillers, not because we couldn't recreate them on stage... There isn't much left over from the first two albums, in terms of out-takes or different versions, purely because of the way we worked. There was an incredible pressure on us."

"Before Chas was satisfied with *Hey Joe* we spent many hours sweating in the studio," said Jimi, "if it was up to him he would sleep in the studio. The combination of producer/manager is marvellous."

Most of the studios in London used half-inch four-track tape, a detail that Chas overlooked: "I nearly screwed it all up because my master tape was one-inch four-track! With *Hey Joe*, I didn't know how to run the place, I was just a dumb bass player trying to become a producer." But by having personally financed the band's initial recording sessions, Chas retained creative control and sidestepped "staff producers" who often used session players to water

down wilder music. Chas recorded *The Experience* properly and then tried to broker a deal with one of Britain's few major record companies. He was told that Jimi "didn't have anything."

Kit Lambert and Chris Stamp were the creative managers of *The Who*. "When we saw Jimi we said that we wanted to be involved with this guy," said Stamp, "we couldn't get in as producers, we couldn't get in as managers... we then talked to them about a record deal." Track Records was launched on March 16, 1967. The next day *Purple Haze* b/w *51st Anniversary* was the first record to sport the Track label. *Purple Haze* had been slated to coincide with the release of *Are You Experienced?*, but in mid-March Chas told *Melody Maker*, "Due to a fault we have decided to re-record all but six of the LP tracks. Jimi has written about 15 more numbers since we started work on the LP so we're going to record all those as well. I'm afraid it's starting from scratch all over again - and will mean that the album is going to be delayed for over one month."

As the final stretch of sessions progressed, Jimi, Mitch and Noel prepared for their first British tour. Jimi knew the disadvantage caused by the delayed release of his album; "I really hate to lose out, you can't blame me for being selfish by trying to get our songs across to the public as quick as possible."

Finally, the last recording session took place on April 4. Tapes were mixed until April 9, but from the October sessions at Kingsway through the last dates in April, *AYE?* was created in a total of 16 sessions throughout the autumn, winter and early spring. "When you really count up the hours," said Chas, "it was recorded and mixed in maybe 60 hours in the studio in total." A mid-April preview in *NME* described

how "after one prolonged electrical neurosis there was a mind shattering instrumental" and then reported "there has been a hold up in Jimi's first LP because of the switch to the Track label, and tapes have been damaged in the transferring of studios."

While the music world held its breath, the third Experience single was issued on May 6. "Maybe we should have waited for *Purple Haze* to cool down before releasing *The Wind Cries Mary*," Jimi wondered, adding, "The last two records I wrote myself, we write all our own stuff now."

In the meantime, advance orders for the album reached 25,000. The disc's release date was set for May 26 to coincide with a big promotion campaign, but one week after *The Wind Cries Mary* hit the airwaves, a "distribution error" at Track Records caused 2000 copies of the album to be "leaked out" to shops in London and the Midlands. Track had little choice but to "rush release" *Are You Experienced?* on May 12, two weeks ahead of schedule. "Admittedly, the copies first went out in error," explained Chris Stamp, "but there were so many orders already in hand, we couldn't have held up the LP any longer."

"This could put the group's career plans back as much as six months," barked Chas, "the LP may damage sales of the two singles."

AYE? entered British charts at #21 on May 25. By early June it hit #2, right behind *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The two albums were recorded simultaneously over the past six months while Jimi

and *The Beatles* were becoming acquainted in London. When the "Summer of Love" arrived, *Are You Experienced?* and *Sgt. Pepper* stood as two pillars of new consciousness.

Jimi's album remained lodged in the British charts for the next 33 weeks. He told the press, "Eddie Kramer was the engineer and George (Chkiantz) too. Chas was our producer, he kept things together. *AYE?* was one the most direct albums we've done. What it was saying was 'Let us through the wall, man, we want you to dig us.' I want the album to show how

we play in person. I don't necessarily want it to be perfect. I don't want people to get the idea it's a collection of freak-out material. It has a little rock 'n' roll, and then it has a blues and it has a few freak-out tunes. It's a collection of free feeling and imagination. Imagination is very important.

"It's a mixture of rock, blues and jazz, a music that's still developing, that's just now coming, a music of the future. Maybe some of the stuff

is far ahead. I don't know. I'm very happy with it. I would under no circumstances call it psychedelic. Sooner Bach and Beethoven (Laughs). On records, we might overdub, but the sound is still guitar, bass and drums, basically. This is a very personal album. I guess you could call it an ad lib LP because we did so much on the spot. Nine of the tracks were put together in the studio. We'll go and sit somewhere outside and just talk about anything except music, tell a few jokes and chat. Then we usually manage to think of something when we start again."



On June 13 Jimi crossed the Atlantic to start the band's first American tour. When they returned to Britain on August 20, their album was being released in the States. *AYE?* entered US charts at #190 on August 26, 1967. In September it jumped from a cliff-hanging #100 to #12, finally peaking at #5. Jimi's debut album remained on the charts for an amazing 106 weeks. "Singles were redundant as far as we were concerned," Chas said, "Even *The Beatles* were turning their attention to the LP market. It was the albums that eventually brought Jimi's incredible musical talent home to the American people."

During the summer of 1967 American record companies phased out "mono" records. *AYE?* was introduced just as stereo became the new standard. "People have often underestimated the importance of stereo radio in the US," noted Chas, "Somehow Jimi was synonymous with stereo and that was how we had to project him in the US."

The Summer of Love brought other transitions. "A certain element decided Jimi was a part of the LSD thing," Chas observed, "all kinds of weird and incorrect significances were attached to his songs."

"It just happened that we were around at the time of psychedelia and all the in-clothes," agreed Jimi, "I dug that scene, but not necessarily what you call the 'hippie' scene, because I don't like classifications. These days people think that everyone else ought to have trips and everyone is singing about trips. We just happened to be playing freakout and psychedelic

things, but it does bother us because 'Psychedelic' only means mind expansion anyway. There's so many other types of music. We just happened to be in that groove, that bag right then." Jimi's wardrobe set a standard for "in clothes" too, but his media image soon became a burden. "I always wanted to be a cowboy or a hadji baba or the Prisoner of Zenda," he complained, "They'd love it if I'd look like a cannibal."

Even as the world gasped at the unearthly sounds of his debut album, Jimi let it be known that "already I can hardly wait for something else..."



HEY JOE: "The first time I ever saw Tim Rose was in the Village," said Jimi, "He tapped me on the shoulder and said, 'I'm Tim Rose', and then he was gone. When I was running around, I heard this record by him at a club. *Hey Joe* is a blues arrangement of a cowboy song that's about a hundred years old. It wasn't being played too much but I really liked it. It's about a cat, he shoots his old lady because he

caught her doin' wrong, she's messin' with everybody else. Then after he shoots her he has to run out of town, go to Mexico where he can be free. Lots of people have done different arrangements of it and Tim Rose was the first to do it slowly, I like it played slowly. There are probably 1000 versions of it fast by *The Byrds*, *Standelles*, *Love* and others. I was playing it early, back in the States, so when we went to England that was the first thing we recorded. Johnny Halliday asked would we like to come to play their Paris Olympia with him (Oct. 18), and we did after being

together only about four days and after having about four hours of practice. So we came back and we recorded *Hey Joe*."

"When I heard him do it that first night in New York I thought 'Wow, that's an automatic hit!'" said Chas, "Jimi and I literally used the recording session as a test, to take Mitch and Noel into the studio and see how they worked."

But as Noel remembers, "Our main, and rather huge, problem was that nobody wanted to sing, not even at rehearsals. Even though Jimi had been singing in New York, he was still nervous about being in England and got terribly embarrassed about singing. Me too, I had a squeak, not a voice... At first he'd crank his guitar up really loud to cover his singing."

As Chas explains, "The first row I had with Jimi was the first day in the studio, when we were recording *Hey Joe* and he was getting uptight because he wanted to record it louder. We couldn't get it onto the tape because it was too loud and he threw a tantrum. I'd been to the immigration office that morning... I had his passport and all his details on me... It got to a flaming row and I took his passport out, and it had his airline ticket, and I said, 'there you are, go and fuck off then' He started laughing and that was the end of it."

"Finally we broke down Jimi's shyness and persuaded him to sing," Noel later wrote.

"I was too scared to sing," Jimi said, "Chas made me sing, serious. It was the first time I ever tried to sing on a record actually."

"I think we did about three songs on that first session," said Mitch, "studio time was expensive and there simply wasn't the budget for endless recording. I'm sure that not a lot of time was spent on *Hey Joe*.

Once Hendrix had thought up and shown Noel *Hey Joe*'s walking-bass part, at Kingsway, we'd got it down really quickly and any subsequent versions weren't as good."


"We took about 30 takes of *Hey Joe* in about three different studios to get it right," Noel claims, "but I think they used the master from Kingsway." That October 23 version was recorded exactly one month after Jimi left New York for London.

"It took sessions at Pye, CBS and De Lane Lea, to complete," said Chas, "I ended up going from one studio to another, trying to get different girls to put the vocals on."

"The Breakaways - Gloria George, Barbara Moore, Margaret Stredder - did backing vocals for *Hey Joe*," said Mitch, "Those girls were the session singers of England, they got hired for all the TV work as well."

"We all dug *Hey Joe* as a number," Jimi said, "that was in October, so we put it down on record. While we were working on *Hey Joe* from the beginning to the recording session, I don't think we played it the same way once. We put our own arrangement, our own way and did it. The approach is r&b but that's just the way we happened to feel it. It's a commercial record, with female background singers and stuff, but everyone found that better for the first time. It's just a phase, it's only a very small part of us. We're not going to record anything we don't like though. Generally I don't do other people's songs unless they really say something to me."

Part of Lambert's deal with Chas promised TV appearances for the band and allowed their first single to be released on the Polydor label. So when *Hey Joe* came out on Dec. 16 *The Experience* made their tube debut. A week later *Hey Joe* entered



Record Mirror charts at #38. By February '67 the single peaked at #4 on the *Melody Maker* chart. "There's so many different outlets," explained Jimi, "like *Hey Joe* is just about one-hundredth of our feelings. It isn't quite a commercial song so I was surprised that it got so high in the hit-parade. In the States, the disc jockeys stopped playing *Hey Joe* because people complained about the lyrics. We like it, that's why we recorded it, but we have so many different other sounds, we've just barely begun."

STONE FREE: "We couldn't record the B-side until we got a deal from Track," Chas explains, "cause I used all my money doing *Hey Joe* ... Jimi wanted to put *Killing Floor* on the B-side. I told him absolutely no way - there's nothing going on the B-side but one of your own songs, you will sit down tonight and write a new song. So he sat down that next night and composed *Stone Free*."

Mitch also urged Jimi to steer clear of recording more covers; "After those initial words we had, you know, 'Christ almighty we must have some new material,' he started writing really quickly... a lot of material suddenly came out in a very short space of time. I think that he brought over a scrapbook with ideas and some of those got translated into proper songs, or at least sketches for songs that we worked out in the studio... I don't know if he brought *Stone Free* over with him."

Stone Free was born on October 24 when Jimi returned to the Hyde Park Towers following a jam with Deep Feeling at the Knuckles Club. The next Hendrix session took place at De Lane Lea on November 2. This is when *Stone Free* was recorded.

Chas' business partner, Michael Jeffery, reportedly

signed away rights to a portion of Jimi's publishing royalties for *Stone Free* in exchange for guaranteed airplay on Britain's popular "underground" radio stations. The Experience hit the airwaves during what proved to be pirate radio's finest hour in England. In May 1965 Radio London and Radio Caroline were reaching 13 million fans per week. Government tolerance of the pirates ended in June '66 when legislation was proposed to crack down on illegal broadcasts. Three days after the pirates were served with court summons in September Jimi arrived in London. Around the time Lambert & Stamp signed Hendrix, they moved their business offices to Caroline House, the headquarters of Radio Caroline. In the months ahead 22 million listeners tuned in each week to illegal radio and heard The Experience hit the airwaves. AYE? came out in May as a staple of underground radio during its last three months, until the stations shut down with the Aug. 15 enactment of the Marine Broadcasting Offenses bill. Those final months of pirate radio were all that was needed to launch The Experience.

"Underground radio is getting together so nicely," Jimi said of the pirates, "I just hope it keeps on, with the stereo and so forth, so that makes everybody make better records and stereo singles and so forth. That means music itself is being presented to the public in a better way. Things were getting too pretentious, too complicated. *Stone Free*, that's much simpler, that's blues and rock and whatever else happens. I'd like to break up *Stone Free* and put it out like an American single. If they listen properly though I'm sure they'd learn much more. We've always tried to be honest through our music and if people don't understand, it shows they haven't been listening. The

music in itself has a lot to say, even if it has a seven word repetitive lyric. *Stone Free*, for instance, has city sounds and sounds of the establishment. It should mean a whole lot in itself."

PURPLE HAZE: "We had one little record and I'm just wondering how people are going to take the next one?" Jimi asked, "because it's so different from *Hey Joe*. I dream a lot and I put a lot of my dreams down as songs. I wrote one called *The Purple Haze* which was all about a dream I had that I was walking under the sea."

As Chas explains, "*Purple Haze* was written on December 26, 1966, at the Upper Cut Club... It was actually written in the dressing room of the club that afternoon. The gig was at 4pm, a press function for the club. He started playing the riff and I said, 'Write the rest of that!', so he did. I knew it was dead right for his image. We went into the studio and put it on tape so that the group wouldn't forget it."

"I don't know what it means," confided Jimi, "I just wrote it. It was just a straight dream I had linked upon a story I read in a science fiction magazine about a purple death ray."

In 1992 *Unholy* reported that the magazine was a June 1957 edition of *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, in which appeared excerpts of Philip José Farmer's novel *Night of Flight*. "All of the lyrical references in *Purple Haze* are directly related to the storyline," wrote Caesar Glebbeek, including Farmer's passage, "*The sky was clear but the stars seemed far away,*

blobs straining to pierce the purplish haze."

As Jimi explains, "The key to the meaning of the song lies in the line, 'That girl put a spell on me,' the song just progressed from there. It's nothing to do with drugs. It's about this guy, this girl turned this cat on and he doesn't know if it's bad or good, that's all, and he doesn't know if it's tomorrow or just the end of time, for instance, he likes this girl so much that he doesn't know what he's in, a sort of daze, I suppose. That's what the song is all about."

On January 11, 1967 Jimi's managers signed a contract with Lambert & Stamp's New Action Productions Ltd. The deal required the JHE to provide Track Records with four singles and two albums for each year of the contract. With advance funds paid from Track, Chas took the band back into the studio that same day for their first sessions of the New Year. "In the early days," said Mitch, "we recorded very quickly. *Purple Haze*, for example, Hendrix came in and kind of hummed us the

riff and showed Noel the chords and the changes. I listened to it and we went, 'OK, let's do it.' We got it on the third take as I recall."

Haze begins with Jimi and Noel harmonizing the bass octaves in E with the guitar's Bb octave plucked above - the famous intro is composed of infamous tritones. A tritone spans the 6th interval away from a keynote, and the 6th harmonizes the most extreme dissonance relative to any other interval. Medieval clergy called tritones "The Devil in Music" and the Council of Trent banned the noise. Jimi was probably



unaware of *Haze's* hell raising overtones. *Purple Haze* became heavy metal Sou's James Brown-in-motion.

The Experience finished laying it down in time for their evening gig at the Bag O'Nails. That night Jimi was approached by a Royal Navy Scientific Service inventor, Roger Mayer's work for the Admiralty involved experiments in sound distortion, from which he created fuzz-tone effects for guitars. "It was like everything I had ever imagined," Mayer said of seeing Jimi play, "I just went up to him and started talking, telling him what I did. I had been in electronics since 1963 and was totally into avant-garde sounds."

A few weeks later Jimi invited Roger to bring his gadgets to Olympic Studios. "The *AYE?* album was recorded all over the place over such a period," recalls Roger, "I went to quite a few of those sessions. I only went to Olympic ones. I was there off and on in the studio from *Purple Haze* on."

"The tape operator at Olympic at the time was George Chkiantz," Chas remembers, "and we used Eddie Kramer as engineer. George was really into thinking up sounds... (Roger) turned up with a fuzz box. He and George would sit huddled in the corner thinking up ideas about sound and how you could misuse the equipment, we'd figure out with George and (Roger) how to misuse things. Eddie Kramer got a lot of credit, but he literally had nothing to do with it."

Late on February 3 *The Experience* recorded at Olympic for the first time. They recorded *Purple Haze*



again, but as Chas explains, "it never quite got that excitement and roughness that the early rough version had, so we released the original tape." That night Jimi overdubbed the solo for *Purple Haze* using Roger's new Octavia. "All the boxes I made for Jimi were called Octavia," Roger explains, "but they were each optimized for different specific sounds. The one that was used on *Purple Haze* gives you an octave above. But it's more than that, because the technique we used is actually the equivalent of putting something in between two mirrors, so you get an infinite mirror image, the doubling goes way out. What we were trying to get for Hendrix was something that would be unique. When they first put the *Purple Haze* solo down, there was already some kind of vocal on it."

Four days later Chas brought Jimi back to Olympic for more vocal tracks. "With *Purple Haze* the only thing we added in the studio was some effects on the voices," notes Chas, "we didn't have machines in them days, so we put the voices back into the studio through headphones and had the phones held around the mike and twisted them in and out, like being played back through a microphone to create a weird echo. *Purple Haze* probably took longer to record than any of the earlier records. Hendrix and I were striving for a sound and just kept going back in, two hours at a time, trying to achieve it. It wasn't like we were in there for days on end. We recorded it and then Jimi and I would be sitting at home saying, 'let's try that'. Then we would go in for an hour or two."

"What sticks out in my mind," said Roger, "was that some of the recording sessions were very late at night and were relatively short. I can remember going to the studio sometimes with just Chas, Jimi, myself and Eddie and going in there and listening to the tracks and just doing a little bit and back to the Speakeasy, you know?"

"That's how it was in those days," Chas agrees, "However long it took to record that one specific idea, that's how long we would book." *Purple Haze* was scheduled for release on Good Friday (March 24) but was brought forward one week because of Easter. It was released b/w *Highway Chile* on March 17, 1967. The single entered Record Mirror charts at #39. The next day Track Records announced an "always-on-call" retailer's service to keep up with demand for their first record release. That same week American distribution rights for Experience records were purchased by Warner-Reprise for \$50,000, the highest fee the company had ever paid for a new artist.

Haze raced to #3 and remained on the charts for 14 weeks, selling over 100,000 copies. "We never thought *Purple Haze* would be this big," Jimi admitted, "I haven't set out to produce a commercial sound, I don't even know what a hit record sounds like. Those two records just came out of us, I'm convinced it was luck. *Purple Haze* was one step on the way to getting our own personal sound, but we have so many moods. I recorded it exactly as we do it on stage. Everyone will think we've used different instruments on it, but it's still two guitars and drums, at one point the guitar sounds like a flute. We play exactly the way we feel, and I write about everyday things and change the words a bit to make them commercial. I'm constantly fighting with myself over this kind of thing."

"In the initial stages I changed a lot of the lyrics," admits Chas, "Jimi would come up with a lyric on a song and I would make suggestions... and in general edit down. His songs tended to be six, seven minutes and we got them down to three and four minutes."

"*Purple Haze* had about a thousand, thousand words," laughed Jimi, "it just makes me so mad 'cause that isn't even *Purple Haze*! I had it written out. It's about goin' through this land, 'cause that's what I like to do, write a lot of mythical scenes, like the history of the wars on Neptune. Like how they got the Greek gods and all that mythology, well you can have your own mythology scene, or write fiction, complete fiction. You make a record in the hope that the public may want to buy it, so you have to make it presentable in some way. You've got to gentle people along for a while until they are clued in on the scene. This whole thing's gonna blow wide open soon..."

Jimi blew Monterey wide open on June 18 and the next day *Purple Haze* was released in the States. The single, b/w *The Wind Cries Mary*, entered the charts at #94 and remained listed for 8 weeks, peaking only at #65. Ironically, *Purple Haze* went on to become the Hendrix song most covered by other artists. And it's the song most frequently heard on Jimi's concert tapes. As he once said, "We do some tunes like *Purple Haze* every show." Upwards of 90 recorded performances have so far been collected.

Asked what sort of experience inspire such a song, Jimi replied, "It could be stuff like going in different strange areas, like most curious people do, and I just happened to put it in *Purple Haze*. But the way I write things, I just write them with a clash between reality and fantasy mostly. You have to use fantasy in order to show different sides of reality, just how it can

blend. Like I was walking down the street in London, completely out of my mind, completely and utterly, and a police wagon came and they said, 'Hi Jimi, how are you doing?' and I replied, 'Is it tomorrow - or just the end of time?'"

51st ANNIVERSARY: "51st Anniversary was recorded on Jan. 11, 1967," claims Chas. "That was the B-side (of *Purple Haze*). A great recording. I always loved that song. It features five guitar overdubs all linking together to sound like one guitar. Hendrix was brilliant. We would record on four-track, premix down to two-track, fill those up, and overdub again... He'd always want to bury his voice, but I loved its rhythm and thought it was great."

On the night before *51st Anniversary* and *Purple Haze* were released, Jimi attended the launch party for Track Records at the Speakeasy. Loudspeakers blasted *Anniversary* as fans danced to rhythm riffs resembling *Wild Thing* flipped inside out. It was the only Hendrix song ever released that didn't feature a guitar solo. *NME* published the tune's only review, noting that it was "not quite as raucous as the top side. There's an intriguing tempo change, and a fascinating spoken passage, plus a thundering beat."

Around the time Track was launched, Jimi explained his feelings about *51st Anniversary*: "The first part is just saying the good things about marriage, or maybe the usual things about marriage. And the second part of the record tells about the parts of marriage which I've seen. I just see both sides but I just really want to witness the first side. All I'm doing in that two minutes is saying my own exact opinions of a marriage. Marriage is OK for some people, but it's not for me. I don't like anything to tie me down. You'd

have to work a whole lot of Voodoo on me to get me married. If someone can change my mind about marriage, I'm gonna be such a big fat juicy bore, such a big monotonous swine that they won't even be able to understand the second part." Like the girl in his song, Jimi's mother was 17 when she married his dad.

51st Anniversary was released in America on May 1 as the flip-side of *Hey Joe*, becoming the first Hendrix record issued by Warner-Reprise. The single never charted in the U.S. "People complained about the lyrics," sneered Jimi.

THE WIND CRIES MARY: "Suddenly it appeared Hendrix had written lots of stuff very quickly," noted Mitch. "I've got this, see how you feel about it." *The Wind Cries Mary* was definitely one of those."

"Honest to God truth," confessed Jimi, "on the first LP I didn't know what I was writing about then. Most of the songs, like *Purple Haze* and *The Wind Cries Mary*, were about ten pages long, but then we're restricted to a certain time limit so I had to break them all down. Once I'd broken the songs down I didn't know whether they were going to be understood or not. Maybe some of the meanings got lost by breaking them down, which I never do any more, it's such a drag. On *The Wind Cries Mary* the words came first and the music was so easy to put there, the whole thing just melted together."

"That was written about Kathy (Etchingham)," recalls Chas, "her middle name is Mary."

"Jimi and I had a blistering row over my cooking," Kathy recollects. "I got very angry and started throwing pots and pans and finally stormed out and went to stay with Angie and Eric (Burdon) for a day or so. When I did return, Jimi had written *The Wind Cries*

Mary for me." It was the shattered dishware in the wake of their row that inspired "a broom is drearily sweeping up the broken pieces of yesterday's life", while "footprints dressed in red" refers to Kathy's 1967 wardrobe - mainly red, to match her hair.

When asked about the girl who'd inspired his song, Jimi revealed, "Mary's a girlfriend of mine, she tells the most nice stories to me. One time she tells me I'm an animal and another time she says I'm a kind of god to her. She is a girl who is slightly taking to talking about me to her friends, you know, one moment she will talk about me like a dog, and the next moment she says the complete opposite. But she is a nice girl underneath. We go to clubs a lot and go all around in taxis and you happen to see a lot of things. The songs just come. It's nerve-racking because I'll start working on a song in the studio and get inspiration while we're recording. That's what happened with *The Wind Cries Mary*. We were rehearsing on stage and then it just came to me."

"Neither Mitchell, Redding nor I had ever heard the song before," said Chas, "but we finished recording it in twenty minutes! We had the third single there and then. He came in, listened to the song and then halfway through he said, 'I've got an idea for another guitar', and so he whipped back into the studio and overdubbed another guitar, listened to it again, stopped, got another idea, went right in and played it."

"It was recorded in one take," concurs Jimi. "I explained to Noel and Mitch what I had in mind and we played it half way through once. Six minutes later

we were through and the song was ready to be mastered and pressed."

Released on May 5, 1967, *The Wind Cries Mary* entered the charts a week later at #27. The single remained on the charts for the next 11 weeks and was Jimi's current British hit at the time of the JHE's American debut at Monterey. *Mary* climbed to the #6 position in mid-June.

"Do you hear a whole lot of feedback in *The Wind Cries Mary*?" Jimi asked, "It's just a slow song, that's what I call it, slow, quiet. We don't play all the

songs loud." When asked if his Dylanesque lyrics can be compared with Dylan, he answered, "Well whatever they want to do. I don't know who I seem like, 'cause I've been livin' with myself for about twenty-one years, so I don't care who they compare me with. I don't think of anybody else. You just say one thing and it just means something else. Like the traffic lights turning blue tomorrow, that means feeling bad. In other words, like if

you do your everyday things like go across the street or something, instead of the traffic lights being red and green, well they'll just be blue, in your mind. There's no hidden meaning, it must be the way you say it, you just express the words. It's nothing but a story about a break-up, just a girl and boy breakin' up, that's all."

HIGHWAY CHILE: *Highway Chile* was among the very last tracks cut during the *Are You Experienced?* sessions. Recorded at Olympic on April 3, Chile was



originally issued as the flip-side of *The Wind Cries Mary*. An early review of the single's B-side points out: "Tempo speeds for this finger-clicker in the Chuck Berry style, with insistent fuzz-guitar." Another of this tune's first reviewers notes simply, "Fast blues and uh-uh, it gets louder again. But good."

Jimi's lyrics tell the story of his wanderlust, a theme he frequently referred to; "I'd like to see my parents, but I don't want to stay home for more than two weeks. I'm too restless for that. You get restless and before you know it you're too old and you haven't seen any of the world. I'm scared of vegetating, there's so much to see. I wish I could travel all the time, it's nice to get experience. No matter how much you like one country you can't stay in it all the time. You must give other places some attention."

None of the six songs that comprised the JHE's first three singles in England were included on the group's debut album on Track, *Are You Experienced?* When the LP was programmed for the American market later in the summer of '67, the A-sides of the first three singles were inserted into the line-up, while three songs (*Red House*, *Can You See Me and Remember*) from the original British Track release were deleted.

The last eleven titles of MCA's re-released *Are You Experienced?* album are arranged according to the sequence in which they were first introduced in England during May 1967:

FOXY LADY: "The last time I saw Jimi," recalls

Little Richard, "I was touring through England and Jimi came up to the hotel... he said, I've got a new record coming out, it's going to be a hit." *Hey Joe* was released five days later. "Sure enough," Richard attests, "when it came out it was a mighty hit!" Jimi and Kathy attended Richard's show in London's Saville Theatre on Dec. 11, 1966 and then went to visit with him at the Rembrandt Hotel. "Jimi introduced me to his little girl he had with him," remembers Richard.

"I get my inspiration for songs from everyday things, and girls" Jimi explained. "Girls can misunderstand you so much, they really can. But it's nice to have them around."

Two days after Jimi saw Little Richard the JHE taped a TV segment for their upcoming debut on *Ready Steady Go*. Following that video session on Dec. 13, Jimi took Mitch and Noel into CBS Studios to record *Foxy Lady*.

"I thought of the ending!" claims Noel. "We were stuck, no one could think how to finish it, so I suggested going to the B note. I should've got five percent for it (laughs)."

Foxy Lady mates Jimi's famous "Hendrix chord" with swollen fuzz tones. It was the first time his odd blur of major/minor tonality became distortion-transformed. And the chord was perfectly suited for amplified static.

"We have songs like *Foxy Lady*," noted Jimi, "*Foxy Lady* is about the only happy song I've written. I'm not ashamed to say that I can't write no happy songs. I don't feel very happy when I start writing. *Foxy Lady*, we messed about with it a couple of times

and we were bouncing stuff around in our minds, because if you get a good idea you've got to put it down right away. We just started playing, actually, and then set up a microphone, and I had these words, the words and music go together. But I don't necessarily use those direct words when I'm talking to somebody. I don't say 'I wanna make you mine' (laughs). Sometimes I don't look at it as me singing the song, I look at it as anybody singing the song. If they get a sex feeling out of it, great. At least we turned them on to something."

MANIC DEPRESSION: On February 22, 1967 *The Experience* played at London's Roundhouse. Noel described the gig in his diary: "Awful - died a death. Horrible place. Jimi had his white guitar stolen." Payments were still owing on that guitar. Jimi quickly obtained a sunburst Strat substitute, but the Roundhouse incident was a bummer and he was depressed. That same night the band was off to another manic press reception. "I told him that he sounded like a manic depressive," Chas said later, "it was at a press reception. So while he was answering questions he came up with a song about manic depressives."

After a gig in Worthing the next day, the band went into De Lane Lea. It was here that Jimi used his new sunburst Strat to record the whole frustrating mess of *Manic Depression*. Jimi's mood broods on a 12-bar blues flipped upside-down. He picks each note with ultra precise plunk. Mitch chums 9/8 rhythms with military precision. One review described the effect as "raw nerves on record... A sound assault upon the mind. Penetrating bass and solid drum patterns. Ugly guitar."

"*Manic Depression* is ugly times music," Jimi agreed, "Our music is getting uglier. *Manic Depression* is so ugly you can feel it. We're not trying to destroy the Pop scene or anything like that. You'll always have cats to stand up there and sing you pretty songs. We're just going to another vein of it, just translating it into our own image, 'cause what I was trying to do, like was a today's type of blues, like *Manic Depression* is a story about a cat wishing he could make love to music, instead of the same old everyday woman. Music is such an important thing now, people have to realize that."

RED HOUSE: "I was largely influenced by blues artists when I first started," Jimi said, "but I was way up in the North West, in Seattle, and they don't have too many of the real blues singers up there. Where I really learned to play was down South. *Red House* is a kind of r&b number which might make the Top 500. It's a slow blues that we recorded in England when we first got together over there. Noel plays a \$5 guitar that he bought off Alan Freeman, which is held together with bits of sticky tape and makes a great sound."

The first takes of *Red House* are thought to date from the group's first session at CBS Studios on Dec. 13, with Mike Ross as engineer. Chas remembers "it was just winged in the studio, just standing around talking for five minutes, and then record it, that was it."

"I actually played a guitar on the original Polydor recording of *Red House*," Noel said, "there's no bass on the original recording. Hendrix said, 'We're gonna do a blues in B' and I said show it to me on the guitar, because I liked to play along on rhythm to familiarize



myself with a sequence. We ended up just recording that."

While Kramer confirms that several versions of *Red House* were attempted during the AYE? sessions, with the track finally being completed "only in early April", the Dec. 13, 1966 CBS session is considered the origin of two takes which were released separately on two different albums. The first appeared on the original Track AYE? album in 1967, and the second version was included on the Warner-Reprise Smash Hits LP in America in June 1969. "In those days it was always very weird," Noel figures, "I could never understand why, if you're in a European band, all the record companies used to re-mix or swap stuff about for the American market. It had nothing to do with the band." Between these two released takes of *Red House*, it is the later Smash Hits version which was chosen for MCA's re-release of *Are You Experienced?* Jimi's vocal is more developed while his guitar lines build flawlessly to a synaptic climax.

"I knew where I was at when it came to specialist blues scene," said Jimi, "specially from my experience back in the States. The blues is what I really dig and the blues is what we're supposed to dig. But we don't want to play blues all the time, we just don't feel like it. We want to do other things. If I'd had two blues men with me we would have gone straight into one bag, the blues. That's not for me. This way we can do anything and develop our own music. *Red House* was released on our English LP, but everybody was scared to release it in America, they said, 'Man, America don't like blues, man!' Blues is a part of America, it means Elmore James and Howlin' Wolf and Robert Johnson, it means Muddy Waters and Bo Diddley. It doesn't necessarily mean that folk blues is the

only type of blues in the world. You can have your own blues."

CAN YOU SEE ME: "Can You See Me" would've been recorded very early on," states Noel, "very early and very quick." After the band cut *Hey Joe* they spent the last week of October '66 expanding their repertoire. Of this period Noel wrote, "We pissed about rehearsing what we knew and jammed loose chords that were to become the songs *Can You See Me* and *Fire*. No vocals. Each of us just imagined what the melody might be." For the next recording session Chas took them into De Lane Lea for the first time on Nov. 2. Noel noted the occasion, writing, "Rehearsed at Averbach House. Saw Hank Marvin. Recording from 6-12. Three numbers." The instrumental break recorded that day for *Can You See Me* was later described by Harry Shapiro in *Electric Gypsy* as "a reverbed Hank Marvin-style one-note bend."

Can You See Me was an effective stage number for *The Experience* right from the start. The song was first documented in a review of the notorious "Who vs. Hendrix" double-header in London's Saville Theatre on Jan. 29, 1967. But after the JHE's American debut at Monterey in June of that year, *See Me* seems to have disappeared from their set. Jimi may have outgrown this quick, uncomplicated rocker aimed at his younger fans. He told one journalist, "I've written songs for teeny boppers like *Can You See Me*, a track from the album, it goes in the key of F-sharp." But the song came close to being deleted from the original LP release when it was temporarily slated for the flip-side of *The Wind Cries Mary* (*Highway Chile* was picked instead).

A review in *New Musical Express* read "Hendrix at

his guitarmobile again. Mitchell scattering sticks in all directions - you try to understand the lyric!"

"We sing that way so people have to listen again to hear what we said," snickered Jimi.

LOVE OR CONFUSION: On Oct. 25, 1966 the JHE made their London debut at the Scotch of St. James. The next four weeks were spent rehearsing, recording, and composing, with a three-night stint in Munich to polish their act. On November 25, one month after the Scotch of St. James debut, Chas organized the band's next British showcase, a press reception at the Bag O'Nails. Seven weeks later *The Experience* returned to play the Bag O'Nails. It was during this later appearance that Roger Mayer presented Jimi with the outer-limits of fuzz circuitry. "With my pedals," Roger reveals, "you get the distortion of fuzz, it's a smoother sound, it sort of sings more, that *Love Or Confusion* sound."

Roger's fuzz was used on *Love Or Confusion* overdubs added months later in '67. Jimi hadn't yet met Roger when basic tracks for *Confusion* were laid down on the night prior to the Nov. 25 press reception. The Nov. 24 De Lane Lea session was the last of only three recording dates during all of November.

It was Thanksgiving Thursday in America when the JHE worked from 2pm until 5pm on *Confusion*. This was their first session composed of fuzz; the dawn of distorto-freak unique Jimi on record. *Love Or Confusion* captures the full flowering of psychedelic

perception budding from the ruins of rhythm 'n' blues. A motorbike kick start guns the zip-lock shooting star. Buzzsaw violins and sunburst trumpets scream and cry. "He used to plead with me at a recording session to submerge his voice under the track so that the music almost drowned him out," remembers Chas. "I never felt that he was as bad as he seemed to think. It's not the range, pitch or technique that are so important to a pop vocalist, it's the emotional communication and sincerity, Jimi had plenty of both."

"I don't think too commercial at times," Jimi confessed. "I mean I can't feel 'pop'. I couldn't call myself that. Our next record may be so uncommercial, just like *Hey Joe* isn't commercial. They'd picked out *Love Or Confusion* to be our next single, but then I wrote *Purple Haze*."

A radio session take for the BBC in Feb. '67 is the only known "live" recording of this LP track which *New Musical Express* described as "an electrical neurosis - more messages from the subconscious.

Incredible sound from three men."

"The feedback you hear is from a little fuzz thing I had built," Jimi explained, "the sustain tone comes from two raggedy fuzz-boxes made by one of The Fugs. I like electric sounds, feedback and static, but most groups I was with didn't let me do my own thing. I started using feedback first in the Village. I fool with it, and what I'm doing now is the fruits of my fooling around."

Never considered a "hit song" worthy of radio air-play, *Love Or Confusion* ranks as one of the most



neglected of all Hendrix masterworks. Three days after Jimi recorded it he celebrated his 24th birthday.

I DON'T LIVE TODAY: On February 15 Jimi told *Record Mirror*, "I'm writing a number, *I Don't Live Today*, it's really weird, man. We like to have our own sound, we have our own kind of blues. *I Don't Live Today* is one. I hope we can get it ready for the LP." Six days later, when *The Experience* were interviewed for *New Musical Express*, they named *I Don't Live Today* as one of the cuts ready for the album. The track was recorded on Feb. 20 at De Lane Lea, following Jimi's appearance at Bath that night.

"We got the music together in the studio," Jimi said, "the beginning came to me, and then the music just made me feel like these words. I don't mean my lyrics to be clever, what I want is for people to listen to the music and words together as one thing. I just used a few words and people said, 'What does that mean?' That doesn't mean anything because there was only three or four lines in there anyway. Maybe a lyric has only five words and the music takes care of the rest. We do exactly what we feel. I don't care what critics say. They are the same people who laughed at first. Now they try to understand, but I don't think they understand my songs. It could be that critics think about the sounds I make even though they don't understand my songs, and on *I Don't Live Today* it's a real strong sound."

Mitch's tom-tom intro evokes a pow-wow-around-



the-bonfire feel similar with *Tomorrow Never Knows* from *The Beatles'* summer '66 *Revolver* LP. But instead of hooting Indian shrieks, Jimi lets rip thump 'n' buck coiled springs, bopped in the key of B. The sitarish guitar-whines break new ground as the first use of "wah-wah" effects on a rock record. "There's a guitar takin' solo on it and it's wah-wah like," Jimi explained, "but see, we were doing it by hand. Then Vox and this other company in California, they made this (wah-wah) scene, but beforehand we used to use a hand wah-wah. The first record I heard with the wah-wah (pedal) was *Tales Of Brave Ulysses*. But we used it on our first one, on this track *I Don't Live Today*, it's a very groovy sound, different than this (Cream) single."

But back in February, without a pedal, Jimi was left to twist the control board dials during the mixing of three overlapped guitar tracks on *I Don't Live Today*. Pete Townshend described the industrial jungle results as being "like trucks and lorries driving over you."

"*I Don't Live Today* is dedicated to the American Indian and all minority depression groups," Jimi said, "to the Black Panthers, all the people that might feel uptight about what's happening today. I was thinking back about two or three hundred years. There's a whole lotta hang-ups been going on, but we're still Americans and we still want to keep things happening nicely and must work towards those things. Your home isn't America, it's the Earth, but things are precarious. Quite naturally things are going bad here.

Let's reflect on this crap. We're all soldiers fighting about different things, we must get together. But don't forget you've got to stop, or get yourself to a point that you just can't live. The idea is to get your own self together, see if you can get ready for the next world, because there is one, hope you can dig it. Here is the time for us to really make our own little world. Let's see what kind of world we want to have. My song *I Don't Live Today*, that's where it's at, dedicated to all the cats that are trying to struggle, all the self-appointed soldiers in Chicago and Vietnam, that are gonna make it anyway. There's nothin' that's gonna stop us, that's one thing for sure, it's just a hard battle, that's all. But in the meantime everybody's aware of disasters. We'd like to point these out by electric sound, called *I Don't Live Today*."

MAY THIS BE LOVE: In early April Jimi had a couple days off from a tour as support for *The Walker Brothers*. He attended a photo session on April 3 and gave a couple of interviews before slipping into Olympic. Marathon sessions ensued from 6:30pm until 3:30am and yielded the final three tracks for the album: *Highway Chile*, *Are You Experienced?*, and *May This Be Love*.

Initially referred to as "Waterfall", *May This Be Love* begins with one of only three known LP tracks to feature Jimi on slide guitar. His "falling over backwards" sky-dive intro was described by one review as "quite Hawaiian", while another of the track's first critics noted that the tune "starts off as if you're playing it at the wrong speed". This remark likely inspired Jimi to warn his fans, "There are only two songs on my album that would give anybody the horrors if they were on a trip: *Are You Experienced?* and *May This*

Be Love. But they are actually peace-of-mind songs."

Like *Little Wing*, "Waterfall" is the Indian name of Jimi's angelic guardian, his mythic goddess of aquatic sanctuary. The ocean is the source of all life and *Waterfall* ripples like the changing currents of a life streaming its way toward repose. The song's bridge over fluctuating rhythms forms temporary eddies, leaving Jimi's dripping B-string lead of unbroken legato to skim the surface of ever-shifting tonal fluidity.

"*May This Be Love* is kind of a 'get-your-mind-together' track," he said, "relaxing things like meditational shades. As long as you can get your mind together while you are listening to them, they've made it with you, man."

FIRE: "Jimi asked me if it would be alright to stand next to the fire," said Noel's mother, "that's how he got the idea for the song *Fire*." Jimi did say that he got ideas for his songs from "everyday things".

Noel's diary records that the instrumental riffs for *Fire* were among the earliest ideas Jimi introduced to the band back in October. But another clue as to what inspired Jimi to write about *Fire* comes from one of the earliest live versions, taped at the Star Club in Munich during March 1967. As the solo heats up, Jimi shouts "Shango, baby!"

When he was living in the Village Jimi befriended Mike Quashie, the "Limbo King" from Trinidad who had popularised the Limbo dance in America in 1962. Mike was also a master showman and Manhattan trendsetter who specialised in the Caribbean ways of "Shango" the "god of fire." Through Mike's Shango dance shows Jimi took in fire worship and possession dance rituals which were long ago in Africa part of the same traditions which, when transported to the New

World, produced Hoodoo and the blues.

When it came time for Jimi to record his tribute to Shango, he met a wizard who possessed the magic of exotic circuit sorcery. "The secret of my sound is largely the electronics genius of our tame boffin who is known to us as Roger the Valve." Jimi said of Roger Mayer, "he's an electronics man working in a government department. He'd probably lose his job if it was known he was working with a pop group. But he's very much a part of our organisation now, he comes up with a lot of ideas. We're mostly working with the high-octaves scene, it boosts the guitar an octave higher."

On the evening of Friday, Feb. 3, *The Experience* appeared in Hounslow. "I went to the Ricky Tick with them," Roger continues, "I remember taking Jimi's guitar to the gig. Jimi was rubbing it on the mike stand and cabinet, the frets cut the strings, they were chopped to pieces. I remember at the Ricky Tick finishing the set, Jimi put the bloody guitar neck up through the ceiling and bent all the machine heads up! And at that time Jimi didn't have many guitars."

Noel remembers that night; "I had to go to Blaises to get my guitar back from *The Lonely Ones*, the band I used to play with, the lead guitar player was using it, it was my Fender Telecaster, I'm certain."

While Noel fetched his ax, Roger recalls, "Right after the club we went into Olympic for a session. Well, that night we began recording two tunes: one was *Purple Haze* and the other was *Fire*. Jimi was using my electronics three weeks after I met him."

Asked if the trebly Octavia solos on *Purple Haze* and *Fire* were recorded with his Telecaster, Noel reckons, "Yeah, it probably was. Later I swapped it in for a jazz bass."

Almost that entire session took place after midnight on February 4 until 6:30am. This was the day that the JHE became "stars" as *Hey Joe* came in at #4 on *Melody Maker's* chart. It was the February 4 issue of *Melody Maker* that ran giant headlines declaring "IT'S JUMPING JIMI!" and proclaiming Hendrix the "newest name in pop excitement!". That night *The Experience* were recorded during an incredible live set at the Flamingo Club.

THIRD STONE FROM THE SUN: When Chas first met Jimi in July '66 one of the things they discussed was science fiction. "I'd always been a science fiction freak and had a book which I told him to read," Chas later said, "It was called *Earth Abides*. It really turned him on to science fiction, and that's where a lot of his lyrics came from."

It was at this time that Jimi encountered a New York musician known as David. "In the early summer of '66 Jimi and I worked back to back fortnight engagements at the once-famous discotheque, Ordine," David recalls. "We got to know each other by rapping in the club between sets... For me, Jimi's lyrics recall that incredibly hot July night when the two of us were cooling it outside Ordine's. 'Hey David, I just wrote this song. I call it *Third Stone From The Sun*, you dig?'"

The summer of '66 was a transition period; on TV the *Outer Limits* had just ended and *Star Trek* was about to begin. Civilization was switching from black & white to psychedelia. *Star Trek* debuted on Sept. 9 while Jimi was waiting to leave for London. He stayed in New York long enough to have seen the first two episodes. The cutting-edge of technology at that time evolved out of the space race, but when Jimi plugged

in to state-of-the-art British equipment, inner space dawned at the final frontier.

On Dec. 13, *The Experience* taped their first TV spot (for *Ready Steady Go*) and then entered CBS Studios. John Mayall and members of *Fleetwood Mac* were spectators as Jimi recorded *Foxy Lady*, *Red House* and the basic tracks for *Third Stone*.

"*Third Stone From The Sun*," says Roger, "that's one that stands out the most in my memory. I was definitely there for some of that." Mayer's memory indicates that *Third Stone* evolved over several months, because he met Jimi for the first time a month after basic tracks were done in December. "By mid-February Jimi owned an Octavia and several of my fuzz-boxes and boosters. We just made them for him personally. Some of the sessions, he might have gone back in the studio and only been there for a couple of hours because it was an overdub, and then zip off somewhere else. With *Third Stone* they were constantly going back and there seemed to be a lot of touching the tracks up as the sound improved."

Mitch's hi-hat taps and cymbal rides vie with Noel's rotating bass to evoke the void of deep space. Jimi's solar wind guitar-sweep scatters cosmic dust. His sci-fi narrative concerns planetary catastrophe: "*Third Stone From The Sun* lasts about seven minutes, it's instrumental, completely imaginable. *Third Stone From The Sun* is Earth, you know, Mercury, Venus, and the Earth. It's about these cats coming down and taking over, but they find they don't really

see anything here that's worth taking (laughs). They observe Earth for a while and they think that the smartest animal on the whole Earth is chickens, you know, hens. There's nothin' else here to offer, they don't like the people too much, so they just blow it up at the end. We have all these different sounds, but all of them are made from just a guitar, bass and drums, and slowed down voices."

As *Third Stone's* sound effects were being layered-on over the winter months, Jimi spoke with reporters about ways to create unusual vocal tracks:

"Sometimes when I'm playing I make noises in my throat, almost subconsciously. Jazzmen like Erroll Garner do it a lot as they improvise, I'm going to get a little radio mike, hang it around my neck and record them, maybe I'll incorporate some throat sounds on a disc."

On April 4, 1967, vocal tracks for *Third Stone* were the last overdubs recorded for the *Are You Experienced?* album. When the song's "slowed down voices" are

sped up, Jimi is heard talking with extraterrestrials.

REMEMBER: Noel's diary records that the Feb. 8 JHE sessions at Olympic ran until 4pm. His entry for the next day also notes "recordings", but no other details. It is likely that *Remember* dates from one or both of these mid-week sessions. By this time most the JHE sessions were taking place at Olympic.

"I thought of the bass line," Noel said of *Remember*, "it's in F-sharp. I just started doing that riff, and Jimi started picking up on the riff. Once I'd



learned the chord structure I started putting together something which we would consider a ballad sort of song."

Charles Sharr Murray later wrote that "the self-deprecating shrug and chug of *Remember* would have been just fine and dandy as a B-side for Otis Redding, from whose *Mr. Pitiful* it was clearly derived."

"We put down the backing track first," Noel recalls, "then Jimi would write later on. He'd come in with scraps of paper and work with the lyric. *Remember* was one of those off-the-cuff type songs."

One London review asked "teeny bopper song?" while another concluded it "a bit too Bo-Diddley-ish but a jerky, medium-pace beater which turns out to be one of the best tracks on the LP."

A few days after it was recorded, Chas announced *Purple Haze* and *51st Anniversary* as the follow-up single to *Hey Joe* and revealed the album title will be *Are You Experienced?* "The album will be different," Jimi told the press, adding prematurely, "all of the songs will be mine except for *Like A Rolling Stone* and maybe a Muddy Waters tune (*Catfish Blues*)."

ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?: "The last track on the LP," Jimi pointed out, "the one named *Are You Experienced?*, it's like imaginary, free-form and so on, where you just use your mind."

When asked which of the LP tracks was most spontaneously created, Noel replied, "I think *Are You Experienced?* would be my vote. We just learned it in the studio and that was it, basically. There's only two chords, it's only A and F, that's all."

Jimi debuted his burning guitar act on a Friday in London. The next Monday, April 3, he did a photo ses-

sion and gave two interviews before showing up at Olympic for a 6:30pm session. *The Experience* worked until 3:30 the next morning on *Highway Chile*, *May This Be Love* and *Are You Experienced?* When they left the studio, basic takes for all 17 tracks of the *Are You Experienced?* sessions had been recorded, only mixing and additional touches remained.

A ticking of galaxy-size clocks alters background/foreground perception... Jimi told *New Musical Express* that it was he who clanged piano on the title track. A palette of exaggerated time and Picasso-esque effects expand the backward guitar techniques first heard on *Tomorrow Never Knows*. "The bass is backwards on it as well," adds Noel. George Chkiantz elaborates, "The original idea was to do a loop, but that gave a problem. We tried looping it but we couldn't get it to loop... in the end Jimi got so impatient doing this, he said, 'look it's quite easy, we're just gonna play' and played it."

In the wee morning hours of April 10 the album was ready, destined to be the *Harley Davidson* of all guitar music. A critic wrote of how Jimi was "squeezing every ounce of electrical emotion out of his guitar... eventually the omnipresent clanging takes over on this exciting and compelling closer... Has some brilliant words. I leave the lyrical interpretation to the medical-men!"

"Anybody can protest," said Jimi, "but not too many people can offer a decent answer. So we're gonna try to do that, like we did on *Are You Experienced?* There's one lyric line: 'Let's hold hands and watch the sunrise from the bottom of the sea,' that's just pure imagination..."



ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?

All selections written by Jimi Hendrix,
except HEY JOE by Billy Roberts - Third Story Music Inc. (BMI)
All songs written by Jimi Hendrix, published by Bella Godiva Music. ASCAP.
Worldwide administration Don Williams Music Group

Produced by Chas Chandler - A Yameta Production
Engineers: Mike Ross, Dave Siddle, Eddie Kramer

Photography: page 5 Dezo Hoffman, page 10 Cyrus Andrews,
page 13 & 14 Linda Eastman, Ed Thrasher, David Sygall, page 17 © A.Y.E.I.,
page 21 David Magnus/Rex Features

Programming consultant: Michael Fairchild
Album notes by Michael Fairchild

Cover & packaging design: Wherefore Art?
Cover image taken from an original photograph by Gered Mankowitz
Inside front cover, page 6, 9, 18 and inlay reverse: photography by Gered Mankowitz
Jimi Hendrix logo by Rob O'Connor

Re-mastering by Joe Gastwirt, Ocean View Digital Mastering
Released under the supervision of Alan Douglas

BOOKLET BIBLIOGRAPHY & CREDITS:

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Crosstown Traffic - C.S. Murray 1989
Are You Experienced? - Noel Redding & Carol Appleby 1990
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Electric Gypsy - Harry Shapiro & Caesar Glebbeek 1990
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M. Fairchild Archives, Melody Maker, New Musical Express, Disc & Music Echo,
Record Mirror, Beat Instrumental, Music Maker, Unvibes.
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