

ELECTRIC LADYLAND

THE
Jimi Hendrix
EXPERIENCE



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"There are so many facets of Jimi's character that haven't been used yet," Chas Chandler said in 1968, "he has much more talent to explode than we've seen yet. When we started on the *Electric Ladyland* album I may as well have not been sitting there, he wasn't listening. So I just said, 'well, I'm not gonna sit around for the ride.'"

"My initial success was a step in the right direction," agreed Jimi, "but it was only a step, just a change. Now I plan to get into many other things. This year we're really going to make it in a big way. Above all our records will become better, purely from the point of view of recording technique. We haven't been happy with a single one! Our producer up 'til now, Chas Chandler, hasn't had the right feel when he turned the wheels in the control room. Before, sometimes I'd finish a thing and somebody else would come along and goof it, in the cutting of the record or in the pressing, they'd screw it up. In the future we'll take care of that detail ourselves, together with Dave Mason who has quit Traffic to spend time on this, among other things. He thinks in a different way, he's got new ideas in recording techniques and a good ear for new sounds. I know exactly what I want to hear. I'm going to take Buddy Miles and Paul Caruso into the studio. I want to write songs and produce stuff. And Noel's going to take some people in by himself, too."

"I wanted to work with Fat Mattress," explains Noel, "because that was giving me an outlet for writing. And I thought I should co-produce, 'cause I got ideas, but Jimi wasn't lettin' me do it."

"I plan to have more instrumentals and longer tracks on the next album," Jimi continues, "because you just can't express yourself in two minutes in every

song. I want to make it a double LP, which will be almost impossible, it's a big hassle, the record producers and the companies don't want to do that. I'm willing to spend every single penny on it, if I thought it was good enough. I'll do that and then they'll leave me out there (laughs). We decided the best way was to just cool the recording scene until we were ready with something that we wanted everyone to hear. Sometime around the end of the summer we'll be coming out with a completely different concept of pop music than has ever been heard before. I can't tell you what we'll be doing. We're the only ones who know. You'll hear it when we spring it on you."

"I'm very inconsistent, it all depends on how I feel. Sometimes I write in a rush, but the things I'm writing now take a little longer to say. It might be more primitive. I'll be experimenting with different instrumentation. We'll keep the basic trio but add other musicians temporarily when we want a different sound."

Mitch and Noel left for London on April 8 and Jimi moved into New York's Drake Hotel. During the month he recorded portable-deck sketches of *Voodoo Chile*, *Gypsy Eyes*, 1963, and *Long Hot Summer Night*. "Our next LP is going to be exactly the way we want it," he predicted, "and it calls for two or three of those funky tunes which I call down-to-earth real tunes. What we do sometimes is lay down what I might have written by day in my mind, all the changes, then we go out there and do a take of it, regardless of how sloppy, then we go back and listen and take the best cuts and talk about what you want to do with it."

Electric Ladyland was cut during Jimi's "hat period", which ran from mid-December 1967 until the following summer. His hat was to 1968 what his military jacket was to 1967, and what his headband became in

1969. But the hat-period encompassed Jimi's massive '68 American tour; "Touring sure is hurting our new LP," he complained, "as a matter of fact, that's the reason it's not released yet. It was supposed to be out on July 21. We're in the process of recording now, some tracks are getting very long, I've written three things about 17 minutes each for the LP, a double LP, that's why you can only get about 20 tracks - our type of tracks anyway - onto two records. We've got maybe 5 tracks and when we get about 15 or 18, we'll release it. The reason why we did this is we had so many good songs. I don't know if they're commercially good. But time was going by and we're playing more and more. Our sound was changing and here were these songs you haven't ever heard. And if you wait six months and put out a single LP and wait another six months for another single, it's going to be out of style. We're trying to give as much of us from six months back until now that we can. Because we're constantly changing, evolving. All the tracks are very personal, they're us. That's why we want to get them out as soon as possible, because this is how we are now, I want them to be heard before we change. But like for the blues, man, I wrote millions of them, and like if we would've used them all the whole LP would have been a blues LP.

"We've been together for about two solid years, we've been going through a lot of changes. That's why we haven't released anything for a while, because there's too many people that are tryin' to work with our image, instead of listenin' to the sounds. What we're doin' now is using the three-piece and exhausting it until we can get all we want out of it. We want to augment maybe a few things. But there's some things that you just don't want to put a whole

lot of junk on top of, like violins, unless it calls for it."

Asked about the album cover, Jimi revealed, "First I wanted to get this beautiful woman, about six-foot-seven Veruschka, she's so sexy you just wanna hmmm. Anyway, we want to get her and have her leading us across the desert, and we have like these chains on us, but we couldn't find a desert 'cause we was working and we couldn't get ahold of her 'cause she was in Rome. But we have this one photo of us sitting on Alice In Wonderland, a bronze statue of it in Central Park, and we got some kids and all."

"Linda Eastman took that," said Noel.

Jimi sent Linda's pictures to Warner Bros. and wrote a note saying, "Dear Sirs, Here are the pictures we would like you to use anywhere on the LP cover - preferably inside... next to each other in different sizes and mixing the color prints at different points. For instance please use the color pictures with us and the kids on the statue for front or back cover - outside cover. And the other back or front outside cover please use three good pictures of us in B&W or color... Any other drastic change from these directions would not be appropriate according to the music and our group's present stage. And the music is most important. And we have enough personal problems without having to worry about this simple yet effective layout. Thank you. Jimi Hendrix."

When the English sleeve came out, Jimi was pissed; "I didn't have nothing to do with that stupid LP cover. I don't even want to talk about it. That album, when it was released over here (US), had a picture of me and Noel and Mitch on the cover and about 30 nice new photographs inside. But people have been asking me about the English cover, which seems to have gotten me into a bit more trouble. I

don't know anything about it. I had no idea that they had pictures of dozens of nude girls on it."

As Jane Simmons explained in a newsletter for the JHE Fan Club, Jimi's own cover designs "didn't get to Britain in time for pressing so all the lads at Track had to think of something original. The boys thought it was a huge giggle."

But as Jimi noted, "Folks in Britain are kicking against the cover. Man, I don't blame them. I wouldn't have put this picture on the sleeve myself but it wasn't my decision. It's mostly all bullshit. S88, you know me, I dug it anyway. Except I think it's sad the way the photographer made the girls look ugly. Some of them are nice looking chicks but the photographer distorted the photograph with a fish-eye lens or something. They messed about and although the girls were pretty they came out disfigured. That's mean. Anybody as evil as that dies one day or another. Our scene is to try and wash people's souls. We're in the process of tryin' to make our music into a religion, it's already spiritual anyway, and we want it to be respected as such. We call our music *Electric Church Music*. It's like a religion to us. Some ladies are like church to us too. Some groupies know more about music than the guys, people call them groupies, but I prefer the term 'Electric Ladies.' My whole *Electric Ladyland* album is about them.

"Now let's talk about the album. First, I'm happy with the content of the record. Only a couple of the tracks came from British sessions. The rest was all recorded at the 12-track Record Plant in New York.



it's a new studio, the engineer was really together. We were all learning at the same time, it's great, I dig it."

When the Record Plant opened in 1967 it housed one of two existing 12-track tape machines in the country. "I guess we started there specifically to work on *Electric Ladyland* around the middle of April 1968," recalls Mitch, "We went there because Gary Kellgren, who we'd worked with at Mayfair, had raised the money with a partner and managed to start the Record Plant. It was a good studio to work in, different from Olympic, which was a big Cathedral-like space. The Record Plant was much smaller, but had an excellent sound."

"I came to the States in April of '68," said Eddie Kramer, "The history of *Electric Ladyland*, some of the tracks were recorded four track in England prior to my departure and were brought to the States and were worked on at the Record Plant and transferred to a 12-track machine, worked on at the 12-track machine, which was a real bastard. Then 16-track came along, because 12-track was only a stop-gap measure. So then they went to 16-track and it was finished that way. It was the first time he'd worked with a 16-track and he must have gone bananas."

"Everybody was telling me that (Record Plant) is supposed to be obsolete 'cause it doesn't add up with today's figures of the tracks and all that," said Jimi, "I don't know, for what we was tryin' to get across at the time, it was perfect. You can get 16 tracks in the States, but who needs 16? You need

only 4, really. It depends what kind of music you go into. If you're going into something straight, only occasionally do we need more, like some of the things we did on the new LP. That's what I call expression music. That whole LP means so much, it wasn't just slopped together. Every little thing that you hear on there means something. It's not a little game that we're playing, tryin' to blow the public's mind and so forth. It's a thing that we really mean, it's another part of us.

"We had some very well-known cats with us. Some of the sessions were like superjamming. Al Kooper is on one track. Steve Winwood is on another. They just happened. There were also some cats from Kansas who hung around while we were recording, they were just on a couple of tracks. The album is so personal because, apart from some help from people like Steve Winwood and Buddy Miles, it's all done by us. Noel kicked in one of the songs, but mostly they're mine, electric funk

melodies, and it goes into blues and hard rock, it goes into complete opposite, complete fantasy. I don't say it's great, but it's *The Experience*. It has a rough, hard feel on some of the tracks, those funky tunes, some of the things on it are hungry."

"As regards *Electric Ladyland* as an album," said Mitch, "it's a concept that was never really completely finished as we would have liked it, because we had to go back out on the road and get out to audiences, we could have spent a year in the studio and it still wouldn't have been finished. As it was I think we

spent about four months, although at the time it seemed to take forever."

"Jimi liked to take his time over his tapes," noted Noel, "we sometimes spent all night on a backing track. Nothing was happening, or if it was happening it took so long that you couldn't tell it was happening. Sometimes seemed a bit messy to me."

"Dear Sirs," Jimi wrote to Warner Bros. When he sent the finished tapes in September, "We would like to make an apology for taking so very long to send this but we have been working very hard indeed, doing shows AND recording..."

"We wrote the songs, recorded and produced it," said Jimi, "I did the production. Why I'm kinda proud of it is that I really took the bulk of it through from beginning to end on my own, so I can't deny that it represents exactly what I was feeling at the time of production. We were getting our thing together with Axis and with *Are You Experienced?* But most of those were predominantly handled by Chas. This is the

first time I did it my myself, Eddie Kramer and myself. We wanted to handle the editing and mixing ourselves."

When Eddie arrived in New York he found the sessions had no real schedule and Jimi was unconcerned with cost. "It became apparent that we were into the next era," said Eddie, "because things started to get a lot more complicated. We were spending a lot more time in the studio and Jimi had much more time to develop his ideas."

"It was a question of block-booking the Record



Plant," notes Mitch, "he was beginning to spend so much time in the studio because we were starting to make some kind of money that we could afford to indulge. Noel wasn't particularly happy with the amount of time being spent in the studio...someone should have had more overall control... there was far too much wasted time and energy."

"It was really expensive," admitted Jimi, "I guess about \$60,000, because we were recording and we were on tour at the same time, which is a whole lot of strain, so therefore we have to always go back in again and re-do what we might have done two nights ago, which is a very hard way of recording. It's very hard jumping from the studio on to the plane, do the gig and then jump right back in the studio. You want to do your best on an LP, you want to play and sing to the best of your natural ability and your natural talents."

Author Hans Sidén reports that when the Swedish band *Perhaps* recorded at the Record Plant in July '68 they were "allowed to visit the studio where Jimi was working. There were his guitars and in a case lay a brilliant feather garb, which Indian chiefs wear in old western movies. Apparently Jimi put it on when he wanted to 'get into the groove'."

"As the recording process got stretched out into marathon twiddling sessions," wrote Noel, "an audience grew in the studio, legions of hangers-on who contributed nothing to the music but were there solely for the trip."

"About the hangers-on," agrees Mitch, "some of that just got completely out of control. In those days there was no security at the Record Plant. It was OK for one or two nights here and there, but it got out of hand. A stop was put to it by Chas and by Jimi, even-

tually, but it did take some doing. Bear in mind, here's a guy, he'd just made it in America, and here he is in New York with all the people that he knew from the past, and there's that side of Jimi, he didn't want to be rude to people. And he was revelling in being successful and wanted to show a good time to all his friends as well. But it did get in the way of work at one point. You've got to concentrate and you can't have lots of people hanging around, and he realized that."

"All I did was just be there and make sure the right songs were there, and the sound was there," said Jimi, "we wanted a particular sound. It got lost in the cutting room, because we went on tour right before we finished and actually cut it. We were unable to spend time on it. The engineers re-taped the whole original tape before they pressed the record for Britain and so much was lost. Some of the mix came out kind of muddy, not exactly muddy, but kind of bassy. I think it's cloudy, the sound of it, because we didn't get a chance to do it complete. We mixed it and produced it and then when it was time for them to press it they screwed up because they didn't know what we wanted. There's three-D sound on there that you can't even appreciate now because they didn't cut it properly. They thought it was out of phase." He'd even had the box of master-reels scrawled on with the warning "special phase effects on this tape. Do not change phase!"

"A lot of the sound that existed on the American album was lost," complained Jimi, "now I'm learning more about this kind of thing so that I can handle it myself. You have to have time. You can't rush through things."

April and May of '68 were the main months for *Electric Ladyland*, with a few sessions scattered



before and after. While on tour in Vancouver on Sept. 7 Jimi told reporters that his new LP was "completely finished, it'll be out in about ten days." *Electric Ladyland* entered American charts on Oct. 19 at #179. The following week it jumped from #98 to #9 and earned a Gold Disc for sales in excess of \$1 million. A review in *Eye* described the sound as "spontaneous and brilliant excursions into the farthest regions of contemporary rock 'n' roll... combines traditional rock with imaginative extensions of the original form." In *Rolling Stone* Jon Landau considered 1968's other double record sets (by Cream and The Beatles) and wrote "Electric Ladyland was the only two-record set of the year that made it in my book... Hendrix is tops and 1968 was his year." By mid-November *Ladyland* pushed Janis Joplin's *Cheap Thrills* from #1 and topped the charts. *Ladyland* remained listed for the next 37 weeks.

The English version was released on Oct. 25 and appeared on the charts for 12 weeks, reaching #5. *Disc & Music Echo* dubbed it "rock music at its sublimest level... a completely different entity." For *Record Mirror* Tony Palmer wrote "Track Records have a major triumph on their hands not only commercially but, more importantly, artistically... a pop work of genius." The day after the album was released *Melody Maker* readers voted Jimi the third most popular musician and *The Experience* the fourth most popular band.

"The *Electric Ladyland* album was good for the time when we did it," said Jimi, "but we really got about half of what we want to say in it. It would've taken about two more LPs. Now we're on to other things. Our next LP is going to be exactly the way we want it, or else."

AND THE GODS MADE LOVE: Jimi called 1967 "the end of the beginning" and he kept that phrase as a working title for *Electric Ladyland* during the early months of 1968. On June 28 he joined an all-star lineup in New York for the Martin Luther King Memorial Fund "Soul Together" benefit concert. The next day at the Record Plant Jimi recorded something that was "different to what we've ever done before." He named it **At Last The Beginning** and explained, "It's like when the Gods made love, typifying what happens when the Gods make love, or whatever they spend their time on." Soon he changed the name of his creation to **And The Gods Made Love** and told the press, "You're really going to be disappointed when you hear our first track on our new LP, because it starts with a 90-second sound painting of the heavens. I know it's the thing people will jump on to criticize so we're putting it right at the beginning to get it over with."

And The Gods Made Love is to *Electric Ladyland* what *EXP* is to *Axis*, but much more refined. If the half-speed, backward vocal track is reversed and sped up, Jimi is heard saying "OK, one more time."

"I love different sounds as long as they're related to what we're trying to say," he said, "or if they touch me in any way. I don't like them to be gimmicky or different just for the sake of being different."

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN (To Electric Ladyland): In 1967 Jimi said, "I just wish I could sing really nice, I know I can't sing. I just feel the words out. I try all night to hit a pretty note, but it's hard. I'm more of an entertainer and performer than a singer."

A year later *The Experience* performed their only 1968 British TV gig (*The Dusty Springfield Show*) as

Robert Kennedy was gunned down in America. Jimi returned to New York on June 7. Later that week Mitch and Noel flew to Majorca for a vacation while Jimi and Jeff Beck made a benefit appearance to raise funds for New York's Reality House Rehabilitation Center. The next day, Flagday - June 14, Jimi recorded **Have You Ever Been (To Electric Ladyland)**, a song he'd sketched out during the *Axis* sessions eight months earlier.

Noel flew back to New York and added some bass lines, but as he later recalled, "I think Hendrix took it off and put the bass on himself. We weren't really working well together at that point."

Kramer added phasing to Mitch's drum track, but when Jimi heard this song played back he declared, "I can sing! I can sing!" *Eye* magazine called it "the most memorable song on the album... a beautiful and haunting ballad... reminiscent of *The Impressions*. It's the best singing Jimi has ever done."



CROSTOWN TRAFFIC: The final Experience tour of Britain ended on December 5. Only one more gig was scheduled for 1967, the Dec. 22 Christmas On Earth show in London. On Dec. 19 Jimi was filmed playing **Hear My Train A Comin'** on a 12-string acoustic. Then on Dec. 20 he joined Mitch and Noel at Olympic to begin *Crosstown Traffic*. The next day, after an interview with Linda Eastman, Jimi returned to work on *Crosstown* until the Christmas On Earth spectacular intervened.

Crosstown Traffic's basic tracks were produced

by Chas and engineered by Eddie. Later in New York, when Jimi became the LP producer, Gary Kellgren engineered overdubs and mixes for *Crosstown*. "I was playin' piano on it," added Jimi (Eddie showed him the chords), "and then we sang the background."

"Dave Mason sang backing vocals with me and Mitch," recalls Noel. Jimi harmonized his guitar with a kazoo and sang through a Pultec filter. While *Electric Ladyland* topped the American charts in November 1968, *Crosstown Traffic* was released as a single b/w *Gypsy Eyes*. Both songs were studio creations never documented at a Hendrix concert. The single spent 8 weeks on the charts, reaching #52. In April '69 it came out in Britain and reached #37.

"You'll have a whole planned-out LP," complained Jimi, "and all of a sudden they'll make *Crosstown Traffic* a single, and that's coming out of a whole other set. See, that LP was in certain ways of thinking: planned in order for certain reasons. And then it's almost like a sin

for them to take out something in the middle and make it a single because they think they'll get more money. They always take out the wrong ones. You find yourself almost running away. People, they don't give me inspiration except bad inspiration, to write songs like *Crosstown Traffic*, 'cause that's the way they put themselves in front of me, the way they present themselves."

VOODOO CHILE: In the April 4 issue of *Rolling Stone* Jim Miller called *Axis* "the finest Voodoo album

that any rock group has produced." It was around the time of Miller's review that Jimi transformed *Catfish Blues* into *Voodoo Chile*. Noel remembers. "I came in the studio and there's like 30 people in the booth when we're trying to work, and I said, 'Can I sit down? I'm just the bass player.' You couldn't even move, it was a party, not a session. On May 2 I took it out on Jimi, letting him know what I thought of the scene. I told him to get all the people out. He just said, 'Relax man.' I had a big go at him and I walked out in front of all those people (laughs)."

"Out in the corridor were all these musicians waiting to be given a chance to play," recalls Steve Winwood. "Jimi came out and said, 'Hi, come in.'"

"We just walked in and hung out," said Jack Casady, "I had no idea that I would end up on record. I heard that there was a little problem with Noel, things were a little cold... Noel was sitting in an adjacent vocal booth with a few other friends on the floor, hanging out. There was a Hammond B3 organ. I had my Guild Starfire bass. Jimi suggested we play a blues."

"There were no chord sheets, no nothing," said Winwood, "He just started playing. It was a one-take job, with him singing and playing at the same time."

"I watched him work," said Larry Coryell, "he was working on vocal and guitar overdubs for *House Burning Down*, and that same night he also jammed with Traffic's Steve Winwood, with Steve at the organ. The result was that long blues thing called *Voodoo Chile*. The stream of energy just went back and forth

between them. I wanted to get in there and play with Jimi, but he was saying it all, another guitarist would have been in his way."

"It's satisfying, working this way," explained Jimi, "I'd start with just a few notes scribbled on some paper and then we get to the studio and a melody is worked out and lots of guys all kick in little sounds of their own. Maybe, if you listen real close, you'll recognize some of the guys working behind. If you do, you'd better keep quiet about it because they're contracted to other companies."



"We all got to play with as many different kinds of musicians as possible," noted Mitch, "it was always encouraged. The usual thing was that late in the evening we'd go down to the Scene and then go 'round to the studio, which was only a couple of blocks away. We block-booked the studio through the night and Hendrix would turn up with endless streams of people."

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time," laughed Jimi, "it's just contact between the people sometimes, we just play by feeling."

The second take of *Voodoo Chile* may have gone on the album if Jimi didn't break a string. But then the final take was supernatural. "We finished around 8 in the morning and left," recalls Casady, "No one had any idea it was gonna end up on the album... We did the crowd noises later... about 20 people... Jimi said that this was a great live take... we sat around the mike and made comments, as if it was a party."

"We just opened the studio up and all our friends

came down," explained Jimi, "like from after jam sessions. We wanted to jam somewhere, so we just went to the studio, the best place to jam (laughs), and brought about fifty of our friends along."

The "crowd" soundtrack was likely added on May 8, but as Mitch points out, "People like to make out that we were all playing together in the Scene, and it was, 'Hey, let's take this down to the studio'. It wasn't really like that. Nice story though."

The final mix was finished on June 10. Jimi's *Voodoo* blues masterpiece was set to define his legend more than any other single Hendrix recording. "Around the southern United States they have scenes goin' on workin' roots," said Jimi, "like there's different things they can do, they can put something in your food, or put some little hair in your shoe - *Voodoo* stuff. I saw it. If I see it happen or if I feel it happen then I believe it, not necessarily if I just hear it talked about. You think that sort of thing is rubbish 'till it happens to you, then it's scary. Things like witchcraft, which is a form of exploration and imagination, have been banned by the establishment and called evil. It's because people are frightened to find out the full power of the mind."

When *Electric Ladyland* came out *Disc & Music Echo* named Jimi "World Top Musician" and pointed out "he is the first major rock musician to put the idea of the all-star jam session into concrete form on record." Eye called *Voodoo Chile* "One of the strongest blues efforts to date... This boy has got the goods."

LITTLE MISS STRANGE: "Noel has a beginning track on one of the sides," said Jimi, "a song called *Little Miss Strange*, this English rock type thing, a

good song. Him and Mitch are singing."

"I wrote it in New York," reports Noel, "I've still got the bit of paper it's on from some hotel called the Lincoln Center Inn." The band's massive 63-shows-in-66 days American tour ended in White Plains on April 6. Jimi hung out in New York until the first Record Plant session began on April 18. The next day recording was interrupted by a stray Friday night gig upstate in Troy. The band was due to resume taping on Saturday, but Jimi didn't show. "No one was there," explains Noel. "'Where's Hendrix? Don't know'. Lay around, sit about. I used to take those opportunities to lay down my stuff."

When Jimi finally showed up *Little Miss Strange* was well underway. "I was basically producing," claims Noel, "I put the whole lot down with Mitchell. I used a little black Gibson with two knobs, it's an acoustic electric, which I bought in New York." Three more days were spent finishing the basic tracks. Overdubs and mixes were done on April 25 and 26, and continued on April 28 and 29. "Hendrix came in and played guitar," recalls Noel, "He was very nice about it, making sure I was there when he overdubbed and checking that I approved of his contribution. I did, and I was very pleased with the results."

Finally on May 5 Noel recorded another bass track and finished the mix. "Everyone said it was nice and everyone enjoyed it," he concluded, "so therefore it went on the album."

LONG HOT SUMMER NIGHT: Jimi's second American tour ended in early April 1968 just two days after Martin Luther King died. On April 7 Jimi was filmed jamming at a tribute to King in the Village at the Generation club. He returned to that club several

that any rock group has produced." It was around the time of Miller's review that Jimi transformed *Catfish Blues* into *Voodoo Chile*. Noel remembers. "I came in the studio and there's like 30 people in the booth when we're trying to work, and I said, 'Can I sit down? I'm just the bass player.' You couldn't even move, it was a party, not a session. On May 2 I took it out on Jimi, letting him know what I thought of the scene. I told him to get all the people out. He just said, 'Relax man.' I had a big go at him and I walked out in front of all those people (laughs)."

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came down," explained Jimi, "like from after jam sessions. We wanted to jam somewhere, so we just went to the studio, the best place to jam (laughs), and brought about fifty of our friends along."

The "crowd" soundtrack was likely added on May 8, but as Mitch points out, "People like to make out that we were all playing together in the Scene, and it was, 'Hey, let's take this down to the studio'. It wasn't really like that. Nice story though."

The final mix was finished on June 10. Jimi's *Voodoo blues* masterpiece was set to define his legend more than any other single Hendrix recording. "Around the southern United States they have scenes goin' on workin' roots," said Jimi, "like there's different things they can do, they can put something in your food, or put some little hair in your shoe - Voodoo stuff. I saw it. If I see it happen or if I feel it happen then I believe it, not necessarily if I just hear it talked about. You think that sort of thing is rubbish 'till it happens to you, then it's scary. Things like witchcraft, which is a form of exploration and imagination, have been banned by the establishment and called evil. It's because people are frightened to find out the full power of the mind."

When *Electric Ladyland* came out *Disc & Music Echo* named Jimi "World Top Musician" and pointed out "he is the first major rock musician to put the idea of the all-star jam session into concrete form on record." *Eye* called *Voodoo Chile* "One of the strongest blues efforts to date... This boy has got the goods."

LITTLE MISS STRANGE: "Noel has a beginning track on one of the sides," said Jimi, "a song called *Little Miss Strange*, this English rock type thing, a

good song. Him and Mitch are singing."

"I wrote it in New York," reports Noel, "I've still got the bit of paper it's on from some hotel called the Lincoln Center Inn." The band's massive 63-shows-in-66 days American tour ended in White Plains on April 6. Jimi hung out in New York until the first Record Plant session began on April 18. The next day recording was interrupted by a stray Friday night gig upstate in Troy. The band was due to resume taping on Saturday, but Jimi didn't show. "No one was there," explains Noel. "'Where's Hendrix? Don't know'. Lay around, sit about. I used to take those opportunities to lay down my stuff."

When Jimi finally showed up *Little Miss Strange* was well underway. "I was basically producing," claims Noel, "I put the whole lot down with Mitchell. I used a little black Gibson with two knobs, it's an acoustic electric, which I bought in New York." Three more days were spent finishing the basic tracks. Overdubs and mixes were done on April 25 and 26, and continued on April 28 and 29. "Hendrix came in and played guitar," recalls Noel, "He was very nice about it, making sure I was there when he overdubbed and checking that I approved of his contribution. I did, and I was very pleased with the results."

Finally on May 5 Noel recorded another bass track and finished the mix. "Everyone said it was nice and everyone enjoyed it," he concluded, "so therefore it went on the album."

LONG HOT SUMMER NIGHT: Jimi's second American tour ended in early April 1968 just two days after Martin Luther King died. On April 7 Jimi was filmed jamming at a tribute to King in the Village at the Generation club. He returned to that club several

times in April to jam with players like B.B. King, Paul Butterfield, Roy Buchanan and Al Kooper. "I met him in the Village when he was going by the name of Jimmy James," said Kooper, "I'd see him from time to time in neighbourhood bars, and then we started playing together a lot in jam sessions at clubs like the Generation, which Jimi later bought and turned into Electric Lady Studios. It was mostly for fun."

In an interview with *Life* on April 17 Jimi said, "Black people probably talk about us like dogs, until we play, I see some of them on the street, they say, 'I see you got those two white boys with you.' I try to explain to them about all this new music. I play them some records. I might play them some of what we do. Sometimes they still think we're crazy." A day later *Long Hot Summer Night* was recorded during the first Experience session at the Record Plant. Jimi had sketched out the tune months earlier in London, but Gary Kellgren was the engineer for the 7pm session on April 18. Jimi invited Al Kooper, the keyboardist on Dylan's hit single *Like A Rolling Stone*. "I got to the studio early," recalls Kooper, "He had a bunch of guitars on stands all lined up, all strung lefty. I picked one up. I'd never played a lefty guitar before. So Jimi comes by while I'm fooling around with this black Strat. He sees me playing and says, 'What do you think of that guitar?' And I say, 'I dunno, it's great.' And he says, 'You want that guitar?' And I say, 'Give me a break' He laughs and says, 'Hey, man, I want you to have that guitar.' And I say, 'No way. Forget it. I'm not gonna take away your ax.'"

"I think *Long Hot Summer Night* is one which Hendrix overdubbed bass on," Noel recalls, "that's probably one of the times when I was walking in and getting uptight and leaving [laughs]."

"So we did the session," continues Kooper, "It was always great fun to jam with Jimi. I'd switch off, play some guitar, some keyboard. He was a great rhythm player, a very unselfish accompanist in a jam situation, aside from being an amazing soloist. And the next day that black guitar arrives at my house by messenger! I mean, that's how the cat was. Very generous. Besides being God on guitar, he really was a nice person."

On May 8 Jimi recorded more tracks for *Summer Night*, but the tune wasn't finished until summer. Returning from a trip to Majorca on July 25, Jimi ran into Jerry Lee Lewis at JFK airport. Lewis refused to shake Jimi's non-white hand. The next day *Long Hot Summer Night* was mixed once more. Asked if he'd jammed with Al Kooper, Jimi replied, "He's going to be on one of our songs, but his piano is almost drowned out. It just happened that way so the piano is there to be felt and not to be heard."

Long Hot Summer Night was paired with *All Along the Watchtower* and released as a British single on Oct. 18, at which time Jimi said "I don't even know what's the B-side to *All Along the Watchtower!*"

COME ON: Speaking of Jimi, Larry Coryell said, "Both of us had our roots in music that was provincial and local to the Seattle area in the late 50s and early 60s. I remember I suggested that Jimi play *Come On* by Earl King, because I thought it would fit him, though I'm certainly not trying to take credit for his using it."

On Monday, August 26 five days of anti-Vietnam riots kicked off at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. That night in Bridgeport Chas

was thrown in jail for asking a stadium manager to dim the lights. The next day Jimi went to the Record Plant and sang *Let The Good Times Roll* over a dozen times.

It was Tuesday August 27. Linda Eastman brought her recently snapped Experience shots to the studio so Jimi could make selections for the album. He was in the middle of conducting its final session. The band was recorded live as they carved out one amazing take of *Come On* after another to cover New Orleans bluesman Earl King's only hit record. *Come On* was among the earliest songs in Jimi's repertoire from way back in Seattle. But as Noel recalls, "He said 'it's in E' and we just recorded it. We worked from a format of knowing the basic chords, get a rough tempo, and agree the break positions. After that we would run through a couple of times to get the feel and get our individual contributions sorted out."

But each take they tried had some minor stumble or underformed passage that forced Jimi to try again. Along the way he picked up snatches of ideas from one version and developed them within the next. Without the luxury of overdubs, all three musicians had to walk perfectly across the tightrope until one collective take rose in perfection above the rest. It happened on take #11. "Eleven!" gasped Noel, "If you're professional, if you rehearse before you go into the studio, you get it in the second or third take. When Hendrix decided to fiddle about, I started leaving the sessions, because recording is boring, very tedious." Of the 11 takes of

Come On, only 5 are of full-blown length. Jimi picked #11 for the album. A critic called the R&B results "a most invigorating specimen in the hybrid of progressive rock."

GYPSY EYES: *Gypsy Eyes* is to Electric Ladyland what *Wait Until Tomorrow* was to Axis, namely, the one stickler that Jimi labored to perfect more than the rest. *Gypsy Eyes* began as a demo in London, then basic tracks were made at the Record Plant on April 24. Five days later Jimi tried *Gypsy Eyes* during the

session for *Little Miss Strange*, and then again on May 1 during a session for *House Burning Down*. Prior to leaving for the Miami Pop Festival on May 17 he devoted another session to *Gypsy*, only to come back one month later and continue. "With 12 tracks," wrote Noel, "Jimi and Chas got carried away. Jimi was entranced by new electronic effects as well as complicated overdubbing, and the lovely simplicity of our earlier recordings



got lost."

Chas told the press, "Jimi will go through a number 1000 times to make sure each note is dead on, that it holds as long as necessary to get the full impact."

"Jimi's self-indulgence of re-recording endless basic takes," conceded Mitch, "Chas couldn't handle it, and neither could Noel." Probably more than any other single effort, frustration over *Gypsy Eyes* was a last straw. "I'd say 'Done! Take three, that's it,'" said Chas, "But he'd want to go on to take 50. It just drove me mad. I said, 'I've had it, I'm off!'" He threw in the

towel and left Jimi to produce the album himself. Soon thereafter Chas sold off his interest in The Experience.

But the images in *Gypsy Eyes* concern Jimi's mother, Lucille, who'd passed away a decade earlier after years of marital woes with Jimi's dad. Possibly Jimi's trouble getting an acceptable take of the song was based in old wounds that *Gypsy Eyes* opened. Then finally on August 27 he returned to it once more. After the band got through a marathon *Come On* session, they recessed to a Chinese restaurant at 1 am and then returned to the studio. "Speeding and coked up," wrote Noel, "we worked from the early evening until ten the next morning. We blew the next day as a result." *Gypsy Eyes* became the last track to be readied for the album.

Asked if he played the bass, Noel replied, "No. I told Jimi he was being silly to try to do so much at once - writer, producer, singer, guitarist, arranger - but he took no notice."

"Some dreams I had when I was real little," Jimi once described, "like my mother was being carried away on these camels...she's sayin'. 'Well, I won't be seein' you too much any more'...I said, 'Where're you going?'...about two years after that she died. I always will remember that."

*I walk down this road searchin'
for your love and my soul too
When I find ya I ain't gonna let go...*

On Nov. 18, 1968, while *Electric Ladyland* was the #1 album in the U.S., *Gypsy Eyes* came out as an

American single on the flip-side of *Crosstown Traffic*. Six months later the single was released in England. "I see nothing but Gypsy people on the road," Jimi said, "you say, 'Why do you call yourself that? Why don't you get a strong name?' You have to give 'em a name that they know, we have to relate, Gypsy is America today, the new and the live America."

BURNING OF THE MIDNIGHT LAMP: "I really don't care what our records do as far as chart-wise," stated Jimi, "we had this one that only made #11, it's named *Burning Of The Midnight Lamp*, which everybody around here hated, they said that was the worst record. But to me that was the best one we ever made. Not as far as recording, 'cause the recording technique was really bad, you couldn't hear the words so good, probably that's what it was. Maybe it's a little murky in there, a bit smoky, but it's the kind of disc you put down and go



back to."

"I like it," claims Noel, "I like the different chords and the bass lines. Chas was producing so he obviously like it. Gary Kellgren was the engineer."

On August 19, 1967 *Burning Of The Midnight Lamp* b/w *Stars That Play With Laughing Sam's Dice* was issued in Britain. The single reached only #18 in the national charts. "The charts," continues Jimi, "that's a bad scene. A lot of nice records get abused through the charts. They throw them up to the top and then they come right back straight down. It

might have been a nice record and nobody will remember it two weeks from now. That was the song I liked the best of all we did. I'm glad it didn't get big and get thrown around. It's a different record. Like I do one thing and they say 'That's great!' I say, 'well how 'bout this then?' and they say, 'Yeah, that's a number one!' So I do something else - I guess something has to come apart somewhere. I think it's a very groovy record and if you don't like it, then turn it over. That's a very nice ditty on the other side."

The Beatles had pioneered the use of harpsichord in rock music when they recorded *Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds* at the end of February 1967. Jimi had become acquainted with The Beatles by this time. His inspiration to create his own harpsichord opus may have come from John Lennon's studio experiments with *Lucy*. "I can't play no piano or harpsichord," Jimi said, "but anyway, I just picked out these different little notes and just started from there. It just came to me. Like we was recordin' and everytime we had intermission, a rest or something like that, then I'd play this little tune on the harpsichord."

"Electric harpsichord," adds Noel.

"So we decided to record it after about six months (laughs) of messin' around with it." Recording for *Midnight Lamp* began in July, about "six months" after Jimi would have known about Lennon's work with harpsichord. Jimi may have begun his own keyboard experiments that winter during JHE "intermissions", but the lyrics for *Midnight Lamp* were composed on July 3 when he left the West Coast following Monterey. "I wrote part of the song on a plane between LA and New York and finished it in the studio," he said. "I was feeling kind of down, right then when I wrote *Midnight Lamp*."

THE

On July 5 The Experience appeared before 18,000 people in Central Park. The next day, while waiting to begin their tour as support group for The Monkees, Jimi, Mitch, and Noel went into Mayfair Studios from 1pm to 4pm and laid down basic tracks for *Burning Of The Midnight Lamp*. On July 7 Jimi went to see The Mothers Of Invention in the Village. "I think I was one of the first people to use the wah-wah pedal," recalls Frank Zappa, "Jimi came over and sat in with us at the Garrick Theater that night and was using all the stuff we had on stage." Jimi returned to Mayfair Studios that day for more recording, possibly overdubbing his harpsichord theme with the new wah-wah effect.

"It starts off very quite until we get into it," he told one journalist. When asked about his lyric "loneliness is such a drag" Jimi replied, "That's what it is really sometimes" and he described the wah-wah as "that loneliness and that frustration and the yearning. Like something is reaching out." *Burning Of The Midnight Lamp* was his first release to feature wah-wah.

When The Experience quit The Monkees' tour they returned to New York and recorded the single's B-side. Mixing and final touches for *Midnight Lamp* were done on July 20, including the harmony vocals by The Sweet Inspirations, Aretha Franklin's backing singers. "They put that on afterwards," recalls Noel, "I'd done me bass bit, I layed down and went to sleep in the studio." One of the Beach Boys noted the tune's "interesting Wagnerian climax."

"I'd like to do another version of *Burning Of The Midnight Lamp*," Jimi said when his tune came out as a single. "I like that song but I don't think people really understood it. Maybe they will when we do it on

the LP. There are some very personal things in there. You don't mean for the lyrics to be personal all the time, but it is. You go into different moods and when you write your mood comes through. So you can go back and listen to your records and know how you were feeling then and how your moods change at different times. Our songs are like a personal diary. But I think everyone can understand the feeling when you're travelling that no matter what your address there is no place you can call home, the feeling of a man in a little old house in the middle of a desert where he's burning the midnight lamp."

RAINY DAY, DREAM AWAY: "Rainy Day, Dream Away was written in Miami," remembers Eddie, "the bloody show was rained out, it was a torrential rain-storm. I was in the back of the car, we were pulling away from Gulf Stream Park... and I remember in the back of the car... he started to write it right there." The JHE were on their way to Italy and Zurich before a TV show in Britain. The band flew back to New York on June 7. The next night at the Fillmore East Jimi sat in with Buddy Miles and *The Electric Flag*. "Buddy Miles, is someone I like talking music with," he said, "What you can do in America, especially in New York, is meet up with guys and just go out and jam somewhere. The club scene is so informal, you just go in, wait your turn, and get up there and blow."

After the Saturday night Fillmore jam, Jimi invited Buddy to a Monday June 10 session at the Record Plant. He introduced Buddy to Eddie Kramer. "I watched those two guys work," recalls Buddy, "Jimi really felt he had an ally in Eddie, because he would always listen to his ideas. Nothing was more important to Jimi than his music and Eddie was always

pushing him."

"You can't just get stock up on the guitar," Jimi said, "you have to use a little bit of imagination and break away. There's millions of other kinds of instruments. There's horns, guitars, everything. Music is getting better and better, music has to go places. We'll squeeze as much as we really feel out of a three-piece group, but things happen naturally."

"I had a R&B band called *The Serfs*, with Larry Faucette and Freddie Smith," said Mike Finnigan, "we lived in Kansas. We'd been playing every night for years and we were making an album in the Record Plant. Tom Wilson was producing the record and Jimi happened to come by. Tom introduced us. Jimi listened for a while and said, 'This is perfect, these guys will understand what I'm trying to do with this tune.' He had the germ of an idea, but didn't sing any lyrics when we recorded. We just jammed a little bit and started rolling tape. Linda Eastman was there, just hanging around with a camera. The atmosphere was very serious and cool. The only instruction Jimi gave was, 'We're just gonna shuffle in D, real mellow with one change, very laid back.' That's what Buddy Miles was good at, way back on the beat. He was the perfect drummer for that track. Buddy was like raw power when he played, he could drive you out of the room! *Rainy Day* was created on the spot. I played organ bass, footpedals, a Jimmy Smith shuffle approach. Jimi said, 'You be like Jimmy Smith and I'll be Kenny Burrell (laughs), that's what I'm looking for.' He used this small 30-watt Fender Showman amp. A couple of ideas happened while we were just jamming, like the ending, we were just looking at each other. The stops and breaks were cued by him. It wasn't something that was discussed.. We played

maybe an hour tops, I think the third take was the take that made the record. Jimi's wah-wah stuff wasn't done when we cut the track, that was overdubbed. I was surprised at how spontaneous he was."

"You might be by yourself writing something," Jimi said, "and come across some words and just lay back and dig the words, see how that makes you feel. And you might take it to rehearsal and get it together with music, see how the music feels. Or sometimes the group is jamming and you might run across something nice. You keep runnin' across that, then you start shoutin' out anything that comes to your mind, whatever the music turns you on to. If it's heavy music, you start singin' things." Jimi sang about a *Rainy Day* as the deluge submerges beneath an aqua fantasy.

1983... (A Merman I Should Turn To Be): When Hendrix missed his recording session following a Friday night gig in Troy, Noel zipped into the Plant to do *Little Miss Strange*. Jimi got there to record *1983* and found Noel's new song in progress. They finished *Little Miss* that weekend and on Tuesday April 23 work began on *1983*. "When we cut this track," recalls Eddie, "it was a magical time, a culminating point in Jimi's musical career. One interesting thing about it, the seagull effects are not really seagulls, it's Jimi with his earphones feeding back into the microphone. He just cupped them over the mike and got this squeal and said, 'boy that sounds nice,' I put some delay on it and wha-la! Seagulls! He had a fantastic mind for

color and space and timing, his timing was immaculate."

"In 1983 he uses what he called the 'Martian dinner-bell' effects," Paul Caruso said of Jimi's African flexotone, "it's a bent strip of metal and a ball, and it strikes itself." The whooping crescendos of Jimi's sigh-in-the-sky floral and fauna fantasy expand the "sound painting" concept heard earlier on *Third Stone* and *If 6 Was 9*. But *1983* has more in common with 19th Century "progmatic" music, where orchestral effects mimick the sounds of nature.

"Now and then I like to break away and do a bit of classical blues," Jimi said, "I'd like to get into more symphonic things, so kids can respect the old music, traditional, like classics. I'd like to mix that in with so-called rock today. I want to get into what you'd call 'pieces,' behind each other to make movements." *1983* is his "classically" composed piece, confirming as it does to the structural requirements of a "sonata-rondo", *1983*'s Aaa B A C

A B/A code layout is a textbook example of the seven-part rondo. And the reconciliation between the B and A sections, with returning G-harmony and Bolero rhythms, allows for a "sonata form" interpretation as well.

Jimi played the intricate bass lines for *1983*. "There were some things where it was faster to work just Jimi and myself," explains Mitch, "Some were cut guitar and drums, some just bass and drums."

"Jimi and I mixed that entire side of the record in one go," states Kramer, "the whole thing as a con-



cept, all the way through with no stops for about 14 hours. All the panning, the phase, the special effects, we rehearsed numerous times, but we didn't want to make any edits in it, it was a flow of ideas, like a performance, and we mixed it together. He would grab his vocals and some of his guitar effects and I would do the drums and his other guitar effects and generally hold on to the whole thing so it didn't fall apart. And we'd be flying around the board like lost flies, it was wonderful, it was a creation of a piece of music in addition to what had already been recorded. A unique experience."

"A lot of songs are fantasy type songs," Jimi said, "so people think you don't know what you're talking about, but it all depends on what the track before and after might have been. You might tell them something kinda hard but you don't want to be a completely hard character in their minds 'cause there's other sides of you that sometimes leak on records too, that's when the fantasy songs come in. Like for instance *1983*, that's not necessarily completely hiding away from it like some people might do, with certain drugs and so forth."

MOON, TURN THE TIDES... gently gently away: The marathon mixing session for *1983*, including his *Moon Turn The Tides* coda, began on June 10 following the *Rainy Day* session. "I used to watch him create the lyrics in the studio," said Eddie, "he had stacks of papers and books and backs of envelopes and napkins that he'd keep in a huge folder and then

when it would come time to put the vocal on he'd blend four or five different ideas together and write them out there and then and go in the studio and sing."

The machine that we built would never save us, that's what they say...

In *Electric Gypsy* Harry Shapiro likened the lyrics to "Noah scamed by onlookers as he prepares for Armageddon." Jimi's writings are rife with sin & atonement scenes of mythic catastrophe:

"The second stone from our star has been busy getting ready for the time to communicate with Earth to try and warn the people of Earth of potential self destruction which is completely against the will and grace of living... we must prepare for the amazement in how the truth shall be presented. Nature shows more than anything and it does get pretty amazing. What's sometimes more amazing is how people miss the warnings of tidal waves, volcanos, earthquakes, etc. I know inside they pretend to miss the message..."

STILL RAINING, STILL DREAMING: The fade-out of *Rainy Day*, *Dream Away* returns with Jimi's "talking solo" overdubs on *Still Raining*, *Still Dreaming*. "The wah-wah pedal is taken to irrational lengths," concluded *Melody Maker*. The *Rainy Day* session produced the first Hendrix LP cut with no Mitchell/Redding involvement. "Noel reacted badly to the idea of guest musicians," observed Mitch, "whereas we loved it."



"Sometimes I get to meet other musicians and we kinda exchange notes," admitted Jimi, "it's going to get like the jazz scene where you see an album by Barney Kessell & his friends. These cats are trying to produce real music. They are jamming together and to hell with the imagery thing. It's like making love to one another musically, like painting a picture together. No hang-ups. This has been happening in the jazz scene for years now. A star, a soloist, gathers some guys around and they groove together. Maybe the group only exists for that one album, maybe they go on for a year or so together, but they don't stretch it out once it's started losing the sheer exuberance of jamming together. You change your style and it's only natural that you should get some new jamming guys round you. I wouldn't want to play with anyone too long."

HOUSE BURNING DOWN: "I watched him work on vocal and guitar overdubs for *House Burning Down*," said Larry Coryell, "the basic tracks were already down. It was amazing to watch him work, he had a couple of Marshalls stacked up. I remember on that cut Jimi used his Strat and his wah-wah. He practiced with his wah-wah, he was the first guy who got serious with it, it wasn't a gimmick." *House Burning Down* was another song that was sketched out in London after the Axis sessions. On May 1 Jimi cut the basic tracks at the Record Plant.

"We rehearsed it," recalls Noel, "but I didn't play bass on that one." More overdubs were recorded on May 3 and May 5, including the lengthy "phasing" process for Jimi's guitar. "On some records you hear all this clash and bang and fanciness," he said, "but all we're doing is laying down the guitar tracks and then we echo here and there, but we're not adding

false electronic things. We use the same thing anyone else would, but we use it with imagination and common sense. Like *House Burning Down*, we made the guitar sound like it was on fire, it's constantly changing dimensions, and up on top that lead guitar is cutting through everything."

The JHE resumed their American tour on July 30. They reached New York for a climatic appearance at the Singer Bowl on Aug. 23 as news of a Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia swept the headlines. That night Jimi and Eddie returned to the studio and finished mixing the most political Hendrix song to date. "I want to release a special out for the R&B stations," said Jimi, "I want to release *House Burning Down*."

ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER: During a verbal exchange between Noel and gay fans, Jimi lost his temper in a Swedish hotel on Jan. 4, 1968. While smashing furniture he gashed his fretting hand and required stitches. When the tour ended, Jimi and Chas remained in Sweden to appear in court and pay fines. They returned to London on Jan. 17. Two days later Jimi, Kathy Etchingham and Brian Jones joined The Beatles in their Apple Office party for a group called Grapefruit. There Jimi was invited to participate the next day in a session being produced by Paul McCartney for his brother Mike McGear. It was either during the McGear session, or at a party which followed with Dave Mason and Viv Prince, that Jimi heard Dylan's new *John Wesley Harding* album for the first time. As *All Along The Watchtower* played, Jimi declared, "We gotta record that! I gotta do that!"

"Bob Dylan was his greatest inspiration," explains Kathy, "he held him in awe, and I persuaded him to do *Watchtower*. I talked him into it. He wanted to do I

Dreamed I Saw St. Augustine, which is on the same album, but he felt that it was just too personal, that it was Dylan's own song and that he couldn't encroach on it."

"Anyone who doesn't appreciate Dylan should read the words of his songs," advised Jimi, "they're poetry, full of the joys and tragedies of life. I'm like Bob Dylan. Neither of us sings in the accepted sense. We just be ourselves. Sometimes I do a Dylan song and it seems to fit me so right that I figure maybe I wrote it. I felt like *Watchtower* was something I'd written but could never get together. I often feel like that about Dylan. I could never write the kinds of words he does, but he's helped me out in trying to write 'cause I've got a thousand songs that will never be finished; I just lay around and write about two or three words, but now I have a little more confidence in trying to finish one."

On Sunday, Jan. 21 Kathy, Brian Jones, and Linda Keith accompanied *The Experience* to Olympic for their mission. Chas produced the session. "I didn't play bass," confirms Noel, "I left again. I told Hendrix to fuck off." The fracas in Sweden worsened their souring relationship, and Jimi's gashed hand still hadn't healed. "While I'm playing I don't think about it," he said, "I forget everything, even the pain."

"Noel had got pissed off and was across the road in the pub," recalls Mitch, "but the track didn't suffer."

Dave Mason filled in for Noel and added guitar as well. "Dave played acoustic guitar on it," said Eddie, "which was kind of unusual. Jimi kept screaming at him, 'Get it right', because he couldn't remember the changes. And it took a while to cut the track, but it was never finished in England, it was taken to the States and then we overdubbed. It started as a four-

track and then ended up in the States as a twelve-track tape, after being transferred, so by the time it actually got finished it went through quite a few stages."

At one point a clumsy piano track was even tried. When *Watchtower* was transferred at the Record Plant that spring Jimi overdubbed Mason's bass tracks with his own. "Jimi was a fine bass player," noted Mitch, "one of the best, very Motown-style. He was a very busy bass player... *All Along The Watchtower* is a classic example of Hendrix's bass-playing... he just had that touch."

"We mixed from an Ampex MM1000 sixteen-track down to a two-track Scully machine running at 15 ips," remembers Toni Bongiovi, "in the transfer process, the tape got lost and we ended up doing more than 15 different mixes. Hendrix would stop the tape... and start re-overdubbing stuff. Recording these new ideas meant that he would have to erase something. In the weeks prior to the mixing... he would overdub the bass and guitar parts until he was satisfied. He'd say 'I think I hear it a bit differently.'"

Eddie describes how during recording Jimi would "pop his head around the corner and say, 'Was that alright? Are you sure?' I'd say 'yeah Jimi that's great'. He'd say, 'well I'm gonna do another one,' and we'd keep doing tracks and each one would be better than the next one and he would never think that what he did was good enough and you're sitting there with six or seven masterful guitar tracks, five or six great vocal tracks. I mean it's very hard to pick for that guy. He was very stimulating to work with."

"*Watchtower*," mused Bob Dylan, "it probably came to me during a thunder and lightning storm. I'm sure it did. I liked Jimi Hendrix's record of this and

ever since he died I've been doing it the same way. The meaning of the song didn't change like when some artists do other artist's songs. Strange though how when I sing it I always feel like it's a tribute to him in some kind of way."

"In *All Along The Watchtower* Dylan said it so groovy," reciprocated Jimi, "I like to get into really good lyrics. After recording *Watchtower* and listening to it then you hear, only through somebody else's words, what you wanted to say. It's our own arrangement though; we just used this solo guitar as different types of sounds. Like we used it as slide and then a wah-wah and then it'd be out straight." Jimi set the Strat across his lap and ran the back of his lighter across the strings to get the slide effect.

"So he did *Watchtower*," continues Kathy, "and he didn't do anything with it for ages while he was thinking about it. He didn't dare release it, because it was a 'Bob Dylan' song. But I played it to everybody and it used to drive him mad. George Harrison told me to turn it off, because it was great, it's one of the best things Jimi ever did as far as being himself was concerned. He came right out of himself when he did *Watchtower* and he enjoyed it."

Jimi was in Denver writing his *Letter To The Room Full Of Mirrors* on Sept. 2 when *All Along The Watchtower* was released b/w *Burning Of The Midnight Lamp*. The single entered American charts on Sept. 21 at #66. It spent 9 weeks on the charts, reaching only #20. *Watchtower* scored the highest chart position of any Hendrix single in America. A

month later on Oct. 18 it came out in England b/w *Long Hot Summer Night*. British fans pushed it up to #5 when one critic described *Watchtower* as "orgasmic, spluttering, aching, as if the entire fabric of the world is being torn apart."

"It's a good feeling to know that someone is digging you everywhere you go," Jimi said, "so many people have dug the one thing you've just laid down and it's being played everywhere. But I never know what's going to be released. My record company just takes something off an album and issues it. We've never really based ourselves on singles. *Watchtower* was the first single I had as a hit in America and yet we were pulling huge audiences before it."

VOODOO CHILD (Slight

Return): "With *Voodoo Child* (slight return)," explains Jimi, "somebody was filming when we started doing that. We did that about three times because they wanted to film us in the studio -

'Make like you're recording, boys', so, 'OK, let's play this in E, a-one a-two and a-three' - and then we went into *Voodoo Child*."

For 16 days in May '68 an ABC-TV film crew followed *The Experience* to stage and studio. Shooting began at the Record Plant on May 3. "I'd left the session," Noel said of his May 2 confrontation with Jimi over loads of spectators. "I returned the next day because the session was being filmed. I remember we were working and all these people turned up. We'd started and they arrived and were saying, 'We're



gonna start filming' and we just ignored them anyway (laughs). They were probably there for about an hour and we played away and they recorded it." The footage begins with scenes of a groupie sketching Jimi as he records **Voodoo Child**. The scene cuts to the control room where Eddie tells an interviewer, "Jimi's music is here to stay, Jimi is easy to work with, imaginative and quick. He appeals to 12-16 age teeny-boppers and the 20 and up older age group as well." Michael Jeffery and Chas were also interviewed while Jimi was filmed writing lyrics for his song.

"We played the same number all day," claims Noel, "it's in my diary, 'Played the same song all day!'" (laughs). **Voodoo**-thing, it's only in E anyway and there's a C somewhere, so like you don't even have to think about the music."

Recorded live in the studio *The Experience* plowed through 13 takes, with only 5 getting as far as the solo. Jimi sculpts and tailors the song-form on the spot while the tape rolls. For the 7th take he switches on the wah-wah for the first time and begins to strum. Each version sprouts new ideas and effects, the best of which Jimi snowballs into the next attempt, like a surfer in search of that one ecstatic wave. "Music is in a spiritual thing of its own," he observed, "it's like the waves of the ocean. You can't just cut out the perfect wave and take it home with you. It's constantly moving all the time." **Voodoo Child** came in waves, and when the perfect one washed up with the eighth take, Jimi "cut it out" for his fans to take home.

A week later the JNE played the Fillmore East. The ABC crew then travelled with them to their Miami Pop concerts on May 18. Filming ended the next day with more interviews. Five years later all of the footage was stolen from ABC archives.

After the marathon mixing of *Rainy Day* and 1983 on June 10, Jimi and Eddie added some maracas to **Voodoo Child** and mixed in some final effects. "I added on maybe two more things," said Jimi, "sometimes we pan the echo, what you call pan the echo. That's when you need twelve tracks; you can put the echo on a track on its own, and then for little different effects. You don't always use up twelve tracks, which will make it sound bigger if you don't, quite naturally."

But Mitch remembers how on the night they recorded **Voodoo Child** "a call comes through from Joe Tex asking Jimi to come down and play at the Town Hall... Jimi says to me, 'Hey, come on have a play with Joe Tex!...' What he hadn't told me or maybe didn't know was that it was some kind of Black Power benefit. I'm the only white person there out of about 4,000 people. Jimi's chortling away sort of, 'Ho-ho, got the sucker now!...' The drums were set up out front, it was like, 'OK sonny, let's see what you can do!' ... I did the best I could and it was OK. I wouldn't have missed it for the world."

They may have done (slight return) that night, but the earliest known stage tape comes from a May '68 show in Zurich. "**Voodoo Child** is the new American Anthem," Jimi used to say, "the self-assurance song, not coming from us to you, but coming from the next world too. A song about a cat singin' he's gonna chop down a mountain with the sides of the hand, just building himself up, there's nothin' wrong with that at all. It's a very straight rock type thing, very simple, very funky, our own little funk theme, dedicated to all the people who can actually feel and think for themselves, and feel free for themselves, and dedicated to our friends from West Africa."

ELECTRIC LADYLAND



⌋ Good Times Roll) by Earl King,
⌋ Dylan,
⌋ Eva Music, ASCAP,
⌋ Group
⌋ Co.
⌋ vt Catalog Inc. (BMI)
⌋ f Music



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thro- solo- spe- on f- Eac- of v-

sur- a se- way- wak- ing- whe- Jim-

ABC- cor- mor- sto-

ELECTRIC LADYLAND

All selections written by Jimi Hendrix, except **LITTLE MISS STRANGE** by Noel Redding, **COME ON (Let The Good Times Roll)** by Earl King, and **ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER** by Bob Dylan.

All songs written by Jimi Hendrix, published by Bella Godiva Music, ASCAP.

Worldwide administration Don Williams Music Group

Little Miss Strange published by Joint Music Co.

Come On (Let The Good Times Roll) published by EMI Unart Catalog Inc. (BMI)

All Along The Watchtower published by Dwarf Music

Produced and Directed by Jimi Hendrix

Engineers: Gary Kelgren and Eddie Kramer

Recorded at The Record Plant, New York; Olympic Studios, London; Mayfair Studios, New York.

Photography: page 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14 & 17 Linda Eastman, Ed Thrasher, David Sygall,

page 18 John Adler, page 21 Axel Rad/Retna.

Album notes by Michael Fairchild

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Released under the supervision of Alan Douglas

We dedicate this album to acoustic and electric woman and man alike, and to the girl at or from or with the button store, and Arizona, and Bill of some English town in England, and well, EVERYBODY

HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS AND PASSENGERS INCLUDES:

VOODOO CHILE: Organ-Stevie Winwood; Bass-Jack Casady

LONG HOT SUMMER NIGHT: Piano-Al Kooper

RAINY DAY, DREAM AWAY and STILL RAINING, STILL DREAMING:

Organ-Mike Finnigan; Horn-Freddie Smith; Congas-Larry Faucette; Drums-Buddy Miles

1983...[A MERMAN I SHOULD TURN TO BE]: Flute-Chris Wood

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Setting the Record Straight - Eddie Kramer & John McDermott 1992;

A Visual Documentary - His Life, Loves & Music - Tony Brown 1992; M. Fairchild Archives, Melody Maker, New Musical Express, Disc & Music Echo, Record Mirror, Beat Instrumental, Music Maker, WLJR, Rolling Stone, Univibes, Guitar World. Research Assistance: Noel Redding, Bruce Gary, Alan Douglas, Mitch Mitchell, Kathy Etchingham, Mike Finnigan.

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