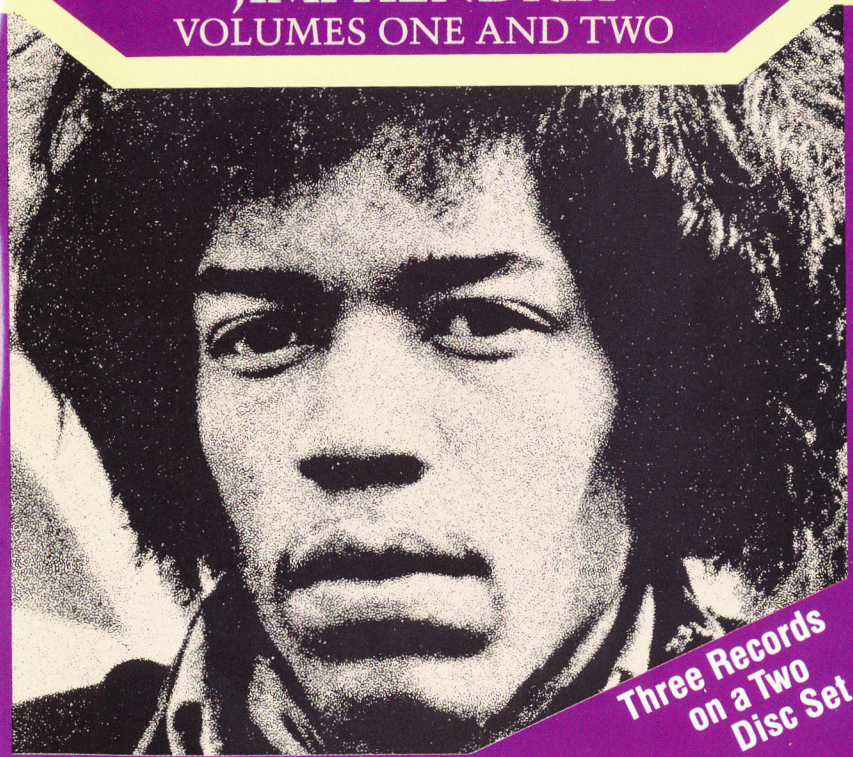
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THE ESSENTIAL JIMI HENDRIX

VOLUMES ONE AND TWO



Three Records on a Two Disc Set

VOLUME ONE

1	Are You Experienced?	4:07
2	Third Stone From The Sun	6:37
3	Purple Haze	2:47
4	Hey Joe	3:25
5	Fire	2:41
6	Foxey Lady	3:15
7	The Wind Cries Mary	3:15
8	I Don't Live Today	3:49
9	Little Wing	2:24
10	If 6 Was 9	5:32
11	Bold As Love	4:08
12	Little Miss Lover	2:20
13	Castles Made Of Sand	2:45
14	Gypsy Eyes	3:39
15	Burning Of The Midnight Lamp	3:35
16	Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)	5:08
17	Crosstown Traffic	2:17
18	Still Raining, Still Dreaming	4:22

VOLUME TWO

1	Have You Ever Been (To Electric Ladyland)	2:09
2	All Along The Watchtower	3:57
3	House Burning Down	4:30
4	Room Full of Mirrors	3:16
5	Izabella	2:49
6	Freedom	3:23
7	Dolly Dagger	4:40
8	Stepping Stone	4:06
9	Drifting	3:45
10	Ezy Rider	4:05
11	Wild Thing	6:44
12	Machine Gun	12:09
13	The Star Spangled Banner	3:45
14	Gloria	8:47

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Jimi Hendrix
Nov. 27, 1942-Sept. 18, 1970
By Don Menn.

His hands are what made him look so tall. They could have been stitched onto someone a foot taller. But James Marshall Hendrix, who only stood 5′ 11″ made good use of what he had and what he heard.

What he heard to begin with were the sounds of the Forties and Fifties blaring out of radios, phonographs, and the televisions in his hometown of Seattle, Washington. He was acquainted as well with the sounds of other eras preserved in his father's extensive record collection, which contained primarily blues and R&B artists. The sounds from those around him must have stayed in his ears, too—his father slapping the spoons on his thighs and palms, his mother (Lucille, who died when he was ten) running her fingers occasionally up and down a piano, and his aunt playing keyboard with authority at the Dunlap Baptist Church (where Jimi's funeral was later to be held). Jimi's dad, James Allen Hendrix, a landscape gardener, traded in his sax for an acoustic guitar to replace the broom his 12-year old boy strummed. Jimi began to train himself. He'd watch other guitarists and see them playing things which he'd pick up and try to himself, usually left-handed, but sometimes right-handed. Though he never learned to read music he was always jamming, and logged much practice time gigging a half-dozen rock orientated groups in Seattle. They played the local clubs or travelled 120 miles north to Vancouver to work dances for 50 cents an hour and all the Cokes and hamburgers they could consume. Mr. Hendrix still has a mental image of his elder son (Jimi's brother, Leon, was five years younger) flopped on the sofa playing along with records, radio, and television, and that's where Jimi probably got that Peter Gunn theme he plays on the *War Heroes* album. Jimi's parents were originally from Vancouver, and he spent much time there in elementary school and visiting his grandmother when gigging around British Columbia in the days after he'd entered Garfield High School back in Seattle. But, however highly he was later to be thought of, in Seattle a lot of people didn't consider Jimi that extraordinary a guitar player. Not then anyway.

In 1959, when he was seventeen, Jimi convinced his father to sign the military enlistment papers (he wasn't eighteen yet, and needed parental approval), and off he went with the 101st Airborne Division. This 26-month excursion into paratrooping ended on his 26th jump which wracked his back and foot, and brought him an early discharge. But he'd kept up with his music. Earlier in boot camp he had written his father begging him to send a guitar, because Jimi thought he was going crazy. With the instrument he jammed with anyone, including Billy Cox who would later play bass with Jimi in the Band Of Gypsys. Between 1963 and 1964 Jimi toured the South, "the chitlin circuit" as he called it, with a wide variety of acts. He landed in New York in 1964. His prominence as a sideman grew, and by the time he joined King Curtis in 1965 he had worked with Ike and Tina Turner, Little Richard, Joey Dee, Jackie Wilson, James Brown, Wilson Pickett, B.B. King, the Isley Brothers, and Curtis Knight and the Squires. Chuck Rainey, who played bass with King Curtis while Jimi and Cornell Dupree shared lead guitar roles, recalls that Hendrix was an exceptional musician, just happy to be included. "If he was hired as the third guitar player," Rainey says, "he was happy; he never had a bad thing to say about anything." He also remembers that Jimi had perfect pitch, was ambidextrous, and had enough finesse with jazz numbers to lead him to conclude that Jimi had some knowledge of the Billy Butler and Charlie Christian eras. For anyone who doubted it, Jimi could and did play jazz solos as opposed to strictly rock and rhythm and blues.

Jimi formed his own New York group in 1965. He called it the Blue Flames and himself Jimmy James. By mid-1966 they were gigging in pop music's backyard—Greenwich Village. Accepting a position as lead guitarist for John Hammond, Jr., this Jimmy James character began to make a name for himself among an even more elite crowd that included Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and the Animals. This led to a fortuitous visit from Bryan "Chas" Chandler, formerly the bass player with the Animals, who decided that his and this wild guitar player's futures should be zipped together. After arranging for passports, Chas presented Jimmy James with a ticket, some money, and a promise of meeting Eric Clapton—whom the young guitarist was just hearing about and gaining some interest in. After the arrival in England, Mr. Hendrix received a call from his son saying that he was going to be made into a star. He had also redeemed his original surname, but changed the spelling of his first. Now he was Jimi Hendrix.

In London, Chas snatched up Mitchell (a drummer) and Noel Redding (a lead guitarist who was handed a bass) and the Jimi Hendrix Experience was born. An immediate success in Europe at smaller and then larger clubs, the group signed a contract with Track Records who released "Hey Joe" and "Purple Haze" which became instant hits. Though then considered to be the hottest act in Europe, the Experience was an underground rumor on Jimi's side of the ocean.

However, the group did not remain obscure long in the United States. On the recommendation of Paul McCartney, the planners of the Monterey Pop Festival (June 16-18, 1967) booked the Experience.

At the last show on Sunday, Jimi Hendrix flabbergasted those attending, and America got its first glimpse of what he could do with an electric guitar and lighter fluid. But guitar players were stunned less by his theatrics than by Jimi's unusual approach to music, and his fluent control over and use of distortion which had previously been a game of chance or a factor to be eliminated from (not added to) one's sound system. The second glimpse for America was from the wrong eye. The Experience was put on tour with the Monkees in early 1967 and the idea was not a bright one. The Monkees' young fans were not prepared for Jimi's wild sensuality and roaring music. After less than a half-dozen performances, management fabricated a story that the Daughters of the American Revolution had had the Experience banned, so the group pulled out of the tour.

Hendrix returned to England where his popularity had remained high, and positive response from his records in America coupled with word of his performances in Europe helped erase the memory of the Monkees fiasco. Jimi played to standing-room-only crowds in tours of the United States in 1968 and 1969. Hendrix became a guitarist's guitarist, jamming constantly with the top musicians in the pop field in famous after-hours meetings that included luminaries such as Johnny Winter, John McLaughlin, Steven Stills, and artists from other realms, such as reed virtuoso Roland Kirk. The members of the Experience began to drift apart in late 1968.

Jimi was showing signs of desiring to work with other musicians, most notably the Band Of Gypsys which included Buddy Miles on drums and Billy Cox on bass. Their performance at the Fillmore East in New York was recorded and portions were remixed in their only album, though the group never did tour together. Talk of reforming the Experience and going on tour in the spring of 1970 came to nothing. Jimi apparently went through a period of intense reevaluation on his music and artistic goals. In the spring and summer he toured with Mitch Mitchell and Billy Cox, and in August of 1970 he played at England's Isle of Wight Festival after staying awake all night with Eric Barrett for the opening of his own recording studio, Electric Lady Studios in New York. There he gave a bad performance which has been regarded often as indicative of depression, or a general decline in his abilities as opposed to being a to-be-expected slip-up resulting from sleep deprivation, jet lag, and the 2:00 A.M slot.

On September 18, 1970, James Marshall Hendrix was pronounced dead on arrival at St. Mary Abbots Hospital in Kensington, England. Professor Donald Teare, the pathologist, explained the cause of death had been "inhalation of vomit due to barbiturate intoxication." Though there were not enough drugs in Jimi's body to have caused his death, speculation arose as to whether or not he had attempted suicide. This had been discounted by nearly every person who knew Jimi, many who recall that he was in fact rather enjoying life and the prospect of entering a new, highly creative phase of his career. It should be noted that the sleeping pills which he took were not his own, and were in fact a German brand which are normally broken into quarters before ingesting. Jimi probably had no idea of the dose he was taking to catch a little sleep in the early morning hours of that day. Moreover, in the ambulance Jimi had been placed in a sitting position with his head back; if he had not been sick enough to die—and he wasn't—the impossibility of clearing his throat and breathing at this angle was enough to kill him, and it did. From all appearance his death was a tragic and avoidable mistake.

Gerry Stickells, his road manager, had Jimi's body flown home for the funeral, attended by such notables as Johnny Winter and Miles Davis as well as many of the musicians with whom he had performed. His burial took place on October 1, 1970, at Greenwood Cemetery in Seattle.

What would Jimi have done had he lived? All is speculation, but he expressed many dreams to those around him; some may have been pipe dreams, some may or may not have been brought to reality. Eric Barrett says he sensed "that a whole new trip was coming down." Jimi would call him, and they'd sit up all night discussing ideas. Hendrix had wanted to buy a big top, hire his own security guards, and set up three- and four-day concerts on the outskirts of towns; guards would have been there to keep order and things running smoothly as opposed to turning a concert into a drug bust.

Jimi died the week before he was to have completed preliminary meetings with master jazz arranger Gil Evans to do some recording. (*The Gil Evans Orchestra Plays The Music of Jimi Hendrix*, RCA, CPL1-0667, contains selections that Evans presented in his all-Hendrix concert at Carnegie Hall as a part of the New York Jazz Repertory Company's 1974 programs.)

Jimi himself spoke of a desire to take a year or so off to study music more systematically to learn to write and read. In one interview he expressed an interest in mixed media, in exploring the healing power of sound and color used in coordination. He told Roy Hollingworth in an interview published the day before his death, that, "In older civilizations they didn't have diseases as we know them. It would be incredible if you could produce music so perfect that it would filter through you like rays and ultimately cure."

Guitars, Amps, And Devices

The Equipment of Jimi Hendrix. "You name it, he used it," states Eric Barrett, Jimi's equipment manager from 1967 to 1970. This fact is what makes a complete accounting of all of Hendrix'

guitars, amps, distortion devices, and accessories so formidable a task. Fortunately, however, five years after Jimi's death many of those who played with him, purchased for him, and equipped him—his father, his road managers, his fellow musicians—still recall information that he cannot tell us himself.

Somewhere between his eleventh and twelfth birthday, Jimi received his first guitar—an inexpensive acoustic—from his father, who bought it after seeing his son holding the neck of a broom and strumming the bristles. This first guitar was replaced by an inexpensive electric when the youngster reached twelve, and by an Epiphone when he was about fifteen.

Jimi and the Fender Stratocaster eventually became the perfect match. He bought the right-handed model because he preferred to have the controls on the top, restrung it, and turned the nut to accommodate having high E closest to his toes. The necks of his Stratocaster during '67 and '68 were usually made of rosewood (there were exceptions) which tended to be thinner than the maple necks on the '69 and '70 models. Jimi made his own adjustments at the bridge and around the pickups.

He owned innumerable Stratocasters (he often carried thirteen or more at a time)—black, white, sunburst, whatever was in that day. Only half a dozen can be accounted for today, these being instruments in the possession of Buddy Miles and Mr. Hendrix.

Jimi also favored Gibson Les Pauls, and he owned at least three Flying V's throughout his career (only one remains, a black V with gold pickups, now treasured by Eric Barrett). One other Fender model—the Telecaster—was always on hand, though Jimi rarely used it, and then usually only in the studio. On one occasion he may have played a Stratocaster with a Telecaster neck.

Once Jimi became wealthy enough to buy whatever he needed, his accumulation of instruments began. Henry Goldrich of Manny's recalls selling him everything from a Gibson 330 to a Firebird to a Mosrite double-cutaway electric dobro (which he dropped and broke the same night he purchased it). Other guitars were: A Guild 12-string acoustic; a Gibson stereo; an Acoustic Black Widow (Mr. Hendrix salvaged it); two Hagstrom 8-string basses (Jimi played them on "Spanish Castle Magic" on *Axis: Bold As Love*); three Rickenbackers—a bass, a 6-, and a 12-string guitar; a Gibson Dove acoustic; a Martin, new when bought; and an old Hofner electric. Eric Barrett adds that Jimi generally had more than one of everything except the Rickenbackers.

Modifications to his instruments were scarce or minimal. He had purely decorative designs hand-painted on some of his Stratocasters (as with the one he burned at the Monterey Pop Festival of

1967) and on his Black Flying V. Barrett does not recall Jimi doing this himself, though his road manager of four years. Gerry Stickells (who was also his equipment manager, preceding Barrett), thinks that Jimi did do the painting.

Frets were rarely reworked because Hendrix' guitars didn't last long enough to become worn. In the early days before the Experience carried extra equipment, Stickells says Jimi used to take the small panel off the back of his Stratocasters because that made it easier to change strings. If he broke one during a performance, Stickells would make the change while Jimi kept playing. Jimi spent hours bending his tremolo bars (by hand), to get them near enough to the body so that he could tap the strings individually as well as raise and lower their pitches. In a sense, he also "modified" his guitars by smashing them, since often the axe he used at the next performance would be an assemblage of the unsplintered parts gathered up in a box and stuck together by Barrett.

There are two other alterations to Jimi's guitars that may or may not have happened. Jess Hansen of the Jimi Hendrix Archives stood on stage at Jimi's last concert in Seattle. He clearly remembers seeing another toggle switch on the back of the black Strat, located approximately where the neck joins the body. Jimi manipulated this switch throughout the evening, though its effect, purpose, or permanence is not known. Bill Lawrence,



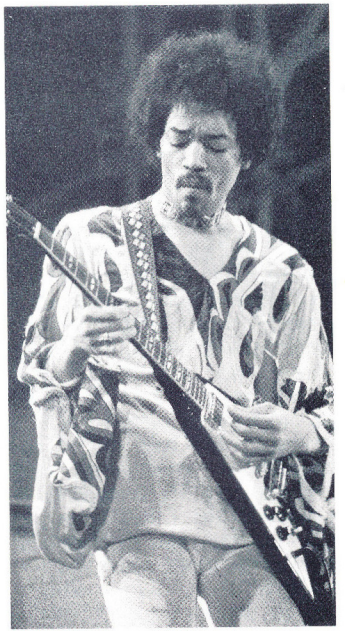
one of the world's foremost experts on guitars and their electronics, says he suggested a design to Jimi for rewiring his Stratocaster. Dan Armstrong, another fine craftsman who learned much of what he knows from Lawrence, may have actually done the work. (Lawrence was not certain whether it happened, and Armstrong did not respond to repeated queries.) Whatever, it may have been a one-time modification, since Goldrich, Barrett, and Stickells—those most immediately responsible for Jimi's equipment—know nothing of such a rewiring of the stock instruments with which they kept Jimi supplied.

Jimi experimented with various amplification systems, but, to use Barrett's words, "it was 99% Marshall." In his rhythm and blues days, Jimi had a Fender Twin Reverb (which he very occasionally used in the studio after he became a worldwide phenomenon). Jimi also sniffed out Orange amps at the December '67 Pink Floyd "Christmas On Earth" show in London, and at his very last concert. Apparently, he could not get the sounds he wanted from them. In 1967, Buck Munger, now of L.D. Heater of Beaverton, Oregon, solidified a five-year contract (it lasted fourteen months) between Jimi and Sunn after the Monterey Festival. He recalls Jimi "right off the boat, with banged up Marshall and Fender gear." Sunn supplied the entire Experience with anything they needed in exchange for Jimi's research and development input.

Jimi started with a cabinet Sunn designated as 100-F, with one JBL D-130 in the bottom and an L-E 100-S driver horn in the top. There was not much midrange (Munger describes it as "almost a surfer sound"), and Jimi combined this with a stack of Marshalls to get a blend. Later, the Sunn setup included up to five Coliseum PA tops, altered for guitar at 120-watts RMS, each with ten speaker cabinets with two JBL D-130 F's. "We then went to four 12" Emminence, at his request," Munger states, adding that Jimi convinced Sunn that the minimum acceptable power at that time was 100-watts RMS (they had been working with 60-watts).

The arrangement with Sunn, which worked well for bassist Noel Redding, did not satisfy Jimi. Part of the problem, according to Munger, was that the English RMS rating might be double the American one (even when a 200-watt English amp only put out as much power as a 100-watt American amp). "Jimi was used to the big numbers," Munger explains, "and when he turned his Sunn amps up, he got a lot of noise he didn't like." Sunn tried to solve the problem by putting on a dial that Jimi could turn up only to eight (though it would seem, on looking, to be at ten). Soon thereafter, Jimi went back to Marshalls.

This setup was humble in the beginning. Stickells says that Jimi and Noel shared one miked, 100-watt Marshall stack for their first album. This stack grew. Jimi came to use two 200-watt Marshall amps with four cabinets. At other times, he used three 100-watt and even three 200-watt heads, miked through PA systems, and as many as six cabinets (with a seventh for monitor on Redding's side). Eric Barrett recalls that the group carried between a dozen and eighteen tops and box upon box of speakers, which had to be changed daily, after Jimi tore through them with his guitar. The grille cloth, however, was left hanging. Since Jimi performed with his amp settings nearly always on full, his systems wore out fast. But his amps were given still greater power through the wizardry of a Long Island electronics brain, Tony Frank, who rewired and tuned up those 100-watt amps (which Barrett believes weren't putting out anything near that specification) so that they delivered 137-watts. Furthermore, Henry Goldrich states that the Marshall factory, after learning who Jimi was, began putting in somewhat heavier tubes and resoldering Jimi's amps so everything wouldn't fall apart. With all this power, it's refreshing to note that Les Paul remembers a phone conversation in which Jimi expressed to him a desire for a tiny amp, in those days preceding mini-amps. As far as can be determined, Jimi primarily used Fender Rock 'N Roll light gauge guitar strings, (.010, .013, .015, .026, .032, .038), though Mike Bloomfield



insists that Buddy Miles insists that Jimi used very heavy strings on the bottom, a medium gauge on his A and D, a Hawaiian G string, a light (not super light) gauge B string, and a super light E. This was supposedly not just for experimentation, but something that Jimi did all the time because he thought it would keep the whole guitar in tune a little better. Bloomfield's information is not entirely secondhand, for he has tried some of Jimi's Stratocasters which Buddy now owns. Miles was not available for comment.

Jimi's principal distortion devices included the Dallas-Arbiter Fuzz Face, the Univox Univibe, and Vox wah-wah pedals. Stickells says that the Experience made it through the first tour with only two or three Fuzz Faces contrasting with the two dozen units that were later carried. Similarly, at least a dozen Univibes (which simulates a rotating speaker) were always on hand, and two dozen wah-wah pedals. Barrett explains that this was necessary because "Jimi never would put his foot on a fuzz or wah-wah: he'd put his whole weight on it: they didn't last long." The wah appeared on the market towards the end of Jimi's first tour, and he quickly incorporated the pedal into his stock setup.

Other boxes and pedals included some made by Roger Mayer. He built, in Barrett's words, "quite a few little toys for Jimi: they didn't have names, just little labels to identify them." Most often used was a device called the "Octavia," especially built for Jimi, which changed the octave on the guitar (Barrett doesn't remember whether the jump was up or down) when Jimi stepped on the pedal. Most of the other devices were not used on stage, though Jimi on occasion used them in the studio, as he did nearly every device he brought home from anywhere. Numerous other individuals also presented him regularly with homemade equipment.

Miscellaneous units included The Bag (held like Scottish bagpipes); a Maestro Fuzz tone, which Mike Bloomfield saw Jimi use while he was with John Hammond, Jr.; and in 1967, 1968, and possibly 1969, Hendrix may have used a couple of Leslie speakers before the Univibe was developed. It could not be substantiated that Jimi used an Echoplex, or any of the equipment made by Electro-Harmonix, as has been suggested by various sources.

For picks, Jimi chose whatever medium gauge his hand came up with when he stuck it into the drawer at Manny's. Eric Barrett simply reports that on tour the Experience carried thousands of picks. They also packed hundreds of guitar straps, also from Manny's, to match Jimi's shirts. The after hours jams that Mike Bloomfield mentions in his reminiscence were recorded probably on two TEAC four-track machines bought at Colony Music in New York. The range of interest that Jimi manifested with regard to guitaring extended into other musical realms, for he not only collected everything imaginable for his own speciality, but also bought pianos, trumpets, saxophones, and other instruments all of which he wanted to learn to play so that he could do an entirely solo album. "That," says Henry Goldrich, "was what the studio was all for." Clues to why Jimi preferred one brand or device over another are scarce. "He didn't express to anybody what he wanted," Eric Barrett explains, adding that, "his ear knew, and only his ears." The only scrap available comes from Mike Bloomfield, who states that he recalls Jimi giving him "a big lecture—that Fuzz Face and Cry Baby were the only ones that really worked." Bloomfield was told by Hendrix that the Cry Baby gave the greatest range from treble to bass, the hugest wah effect, the fastest action, and had the most authentically vocal sound. Fuzz Face, Jimi felt, was the most distorted sounding of such units. The two plugged together gave permanent sustain and endless distortion.

It is impossible to determine for certain all the equipment and effects Jimi used in the studio and on records. We are left only with morsels: *Are You Experienced?* and *Axis: Bold As Love* were both recorded (and mixed on a custom board) on four-track at fifteen inches per second at the Olympic Studios in London. Jimi's guitar is a Stratocaster on the first album, except on the "Red House" cut, for which he used his old Hofner, which was in such disrepair that the pickups were stuck on with Scotch tape (he only used it a couple of times in performance before it was stolen). A Les Paul is probably used for "House Burning Down," on *Electric Ladyland*, while the black Les Paul was featured on *Band Of Gypsys*. Eddie Kramer, Jimi's engineer from 1967 to 1970, feels that it is useless to approach Jimi's music in so analytical a manner. This is partly because Kramer's own approach was often too improvisational to capture, and partly because he does not wish to divulge studio techniques which he considers the finer points of his work. "I think the mystique should remain," Kramer states. "Analyzing it to the point that you want in your magazine is not a good idea. Part of the mystique is what I created with him in the studio, and I'd like to leave it at that." And so, that is where we must leave it.

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JOHN McLAUGHLIN REMINISCES

Jimi was a beautiful guitar player. He wasn't very schooled; he had a limited knowledge as far as musical harmony is concerned. But he had such an imagination that he made up for it. And that's what makes things happen, because if you get a guy with all knowledge and no imagination, he doesn't play anything. Knowledge helps, but I'm not saying knowledge is it....

My impression of Jimi was of strength really. He was strong, and that meant something. To me he was soulful. There must have been a better word for it. What I mean is that he was dynamic. He could do things with the guitar that nobody had done before. In other words, he was a revolutionary, but he still had a lot of soul, and that's what makes things work. If you don't have that, you can't make anything work. I think Jimi has had an effect on most contemporary guitar players.

JOHNNY WINTER...

I first met Jimi at The Scene (popular New York City nightclub). I was a Hendrix groupie, and he was a Johnny Winter groupie. I loved him, and we did get chances to hang out a little, record a little, and talk a little....

I had tremendous respect for him. To me he is still way, way above any other guitar player who has ever been. Not just technically—everything: feeling-wise, and he could use gimmicks, really make them work for him. We never actually sat around and talked about the meaning of life or the wife and kids: it was always pretty much music.

LARRY CORYELL...

I could write thousands of pages about the importance of Jimi Hendrix' music to me. I agree with Eric Clapton, who once told me that Jimi had "strong fingers"—he sure knew how to shake them strings. I have many fond memories of watching Hendrix play....

Jimi was very conscious of being in tune. He was the most incredible natural musician up to that time. He didn't know the names for the truly advanced musical forms that he created, but he didn't need to know them—that's for the academicians. To my knowledge, he hadn't had classical or any other kind of training, yet he had the talent of someone like Stravinsky or Berg. Actually, it's not very good to compare. There was nobody like Jimi Hendrix.

Hendrix was also one of the leading experts on how to make a good record. I watched him work in the studio while he was doing *Electric Ladyland*. He turned his amps up—he had a couple of Marshalls stacked up all by themselves. The basic tracks were already down, and it was amazing to watch him work. I learned a lot about how to work in a studio myself from that experience.

JOHN PAUL HAMMOND...

I met Jimi in the fall of 1966. I had just returned from Europe, the Middle East, the Far East and Japan, and parts unknown. When I returned I got a job at the Gaslight. I think it was in September. One night between shows—it was a warm evening out—I went upstairs, and my friend who was working at the Players Theatre on MacDougal Street right next to the Cafe Wha? came over and said, "John, there's this band playing downstairs that you've got to hear. This guy is doing songs off your old album and he sounds better than you." So I thought I'd check this out. I went down there, and he was playing all these tunes off this album I'd done called *So Many Roads* (Vanguard, 79178), and he was playing the guitar parts better than Robbie Robertson had....

Jimmy James he called himself. Jimmy James and the Blue Flames. He had just been burnt out of some money, and he had been playing with Curtis Knight and before that with Little Richard. He was kind of vague about what had happened, but somehow he had lost his guitar or something, run out of some coin, and had had to borrow some money from somebody to get a guitar. He was playing a Fender Stratocaster upside down and left-handed—one of those things that just boggles your mind. I just could not believe it—playing with his teeth, and doing all those really slick techniques that I had seen in Chicago on the South Side on wild nights. But here was this guy doing it, and he was fantastic playing blues. He really dug me, and I really dug him....

When my job was through at the Gaslight, Jimi and I got together and worked out with a little group that he had...We rehearsed and opened about two weeks after that at the Cafe Au Go Go. We worked out there for two weeks, and it was fantastic. Everybody—Who's Who—came to hear us: Bob Dylan, the Beatles, the Animals all came in. During that time Chas Chandler (then bass player with the Animals) approached Jimi and offered him some money to go over to England to do some recording over there. Jimi came to me and said, "Look it, these guys have asked me to go over there, and they gave me a plane ticket and some money." I said, "Man, you got to go!" I knew there was no way he was going to be my guitar player. He was his own star....

MICHAEL BLOOMFIELD...

The first time I saw Jimi play he was Jimmy James with the Blue Flames. I was performing with Paul Butterfield, and I was the hot shot guitarist on the block—I thought I was *it*. I'd never heard of Hendrix. Then someone said, "You got to see the guitar player with John Hammond." I was at the Cafe Au Go Go and he was at the Nite Owl or the Cafe Wha?—I went right across the street and saw him. Hendrix knew who I was, and that day, in front

of my eyes, he burned me to death. I didn't even get my guitar out. H bombs were going off, guided missiles were flying—I can't tell you the sounds he was getting out of his instrument. He was getting every sound I was ever to hear him get right there in that room with a Stratocaster, a Twin (amplifier), a Maestro fuzz tone, and that was all—he was doing it mainly through extreme volume. How he did this, I wish I understood. He just got right up in my face with that axe, and I didn't even want to pick up a guitar for the next year.

I was awed. I'd never heard anything like it. I didn't even know where he was coming from musically, because he wasn't playing any of his own tunes. He was doing things like "Like a Rolling Stone," but in the most unusual way. He wasn't a singer, he wasn't even particularly a player. That day, Jimi Hendrix was laying things on me that were more sounds than they were licks. But I found, after hearing him two or three more times, that he was into pure melodic playing and lyricism as much as he was into sounds. In fact, he had melded them into a perfect blend....

There was no great electric guitarist in rock and roll that Jimi didn't know of. I could ask him about records that I knew had real fancy guitar parts, where the performer was ahead of his time or playing funky on a record that wasn't particularly funky. For example, Jimi knew all about a very early Righteous Brothers record on which there's a guitarist who plays very advanced rock and roll guitar for that time. There's another record by Robert Parker, who made "Barefootin'," called, "You Better Watch Yourself," that has a real hot guitar with a style more like Hendrix than most session players. Jimi said it wasn't him, but that he knew the guy—somebody named Big Tom Collins. He knew every hot guitarist on record....

...He was extremely interested in form—in a few seconds of playing, he'd let you know about the entire structure. That's why he liked rhythm guitar playing so much—the rhythm guitar could lay out the structure for the whole song. He would always say, "This is a world of lead guitar players, but the most essential thing to learn is the time, the rhythm." ...Jimi would play a bass pattern, and then fill it in with chords, and at the exact same time he would play lead by making a high note ring out while using very unorthodox chord positions. He had a massive thumb, which he used like an additional finger, so his hand positions were unconventional for every chord....

But it was no big thing for Hendrix to play melodies—he wanted to play like an orchestra. This is the crux of his music—it's not just lead guitar, it's orchestral guitar, like Segovia, Chet Atkins, Wilburn Burchette, Ry Cooder and George Van Eps. Jimi Hendrix was the most orchestral of all. Have you ever heard "The Star Spangled Banner" on *Rainbow Bridge*? That's recorded like a huge symphony.



LES PAUL...

It was one of those funny nights. My Number Two son, Gene, and I were taking master tapes from our home in Mahwah, New Jersey to Columbia Records in New York. This was in the mid-1960's, somewhere around 1964. We decided to drive by a nightclub in Lodi, New Jersey which usually had good talent. I stopped the car, and as usual, Gene looked in. He came back out and said, "Father, you better look for yourself. There's a guy playing all over the guitar!"

I went in and stood in the doorway to listen. I was really impressed by what I heard. Yes indeed, that dude was really working his guitar over. He was bending strings, playing funky as hell. I'd never seen anyone so radical. We had to push on to New York, but we decided that after we'd dumped those tapes we'd hurry back to the club and nail that guy.

A couple of hours later, that's what we tried to do. When we got back and asked around, the bartender told me some black dude had come in earlier to audition, but that his playing was too crazy for them—too wild and too loud, so he and the group he was with hadn't been hired. When last seen (about an hour before Gene and I could get back) the guitarist had been fooling around on the piano in the club. That's all anyone could tell us. No one there knew his name or where he could be found.

I wanted to grab that guy, so I started a real F.B.I. search of my own. I told my manager and my friends at Columbia that I had heard a guy that really burned, but not knowing his name or where he made his home, locating him was a real problem.

Gene and I called musicians' locals all around New York and New Jersey—no one knew who we were talking about. Finally we decided to look in every single nightclub in north and central Jersey, and also in Harlem, uptown. But with no name and only a description of a wild man with a guitar—different than what's around, more funky, raunchy—people just looked at us...We gave up and forgot about it.

Some time later, Walt Maguire of London Records asked if I'd come out of retirement and make an album. I agreed, and he thought maybe it would be a good idea to bring out some records of other guitarists for me to hear. In case I was drying up, I'd know what was happening. I looked through the LP's he brought me. Among those albums lying on the floor in front of the console I saw this face.

"Wow!" I said. "There's the cat we've been looking for. That's our man!" Well, Hendrix was already a hit, and I'd heard him a jillion times, but hadn't known until I saw his face on the record jacket that this was THE MAN! Anyway, I was very pleased to know our boy had made it.

A few years later, when Jimi was involved in building Electric Lady Studios in New York he called me up with several questions...During that talk, I told Jimi the story of my hunt for him to snatch him up and get him a record company. He really cracked up. He said, "You mean I was that close and didn't know it?"

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