

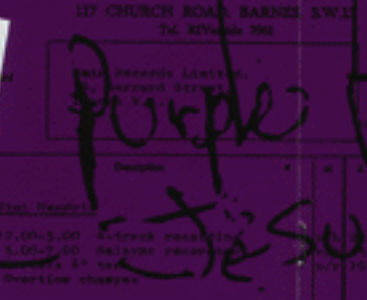
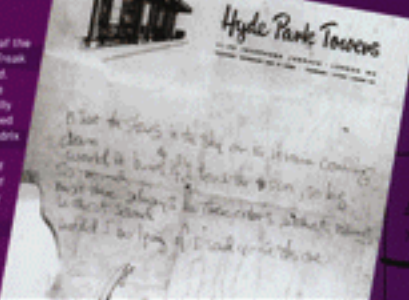


Are You Experienced also explored the idea of the concept album as expounded on Pet Sounds, *Frank Zappa's* *Uncle Meat* and Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. None of those records had been able to resolve their highest ambitions within the fundamentally raucous context of rock'n'roll; they had sacrificed speed, power and grit for brainpower. Jimi Hendrix and company brought them all back together again, and they did it from the very first note of the very first song. The stop-time blues pulse of "Purple Haze" (outside the U.S., it was "Tossy Lady," but the point's the same).

Furthermore, the band sustained the frenzy through the entire album, even on the slower paced numbers like "Hey Joe," "May This Be Love" and "The Wind Cries Mary." That's one reason why it's fundamentally important that Eddie Kramer and John McDermott have restored the original running orders. You have to start with the Big Bang to get where Jimi wanted to take you, on a circuit of his entire personal universe, an experience that would not just entertain you or enlighten you but change your life at its very core. A promise so big that only a crazed rock'n'roller would make it, let alone try to deliver on it—which he not only tried to do but did. For me, that moment when Jimi cries, "Lately things don't seem the same" puts the whole event of the album into definitive perspective, because they never would again.

The other immediately noticeable thing about *Are You Experienced* is that Hendrix is surrounded by such tremendous support. Mitch Mitchell is the only drummer of the psychedelic period whose playing combines in power and imagination to Keith Moon's, so much so that he is the only force on the record that in any way challenges Jimi's dominance—though that's a last cause after the first solo in "Purple Haze." Mitchell never cracks off and in fact, one way to hear "Wanted: Dead or Alive" is as a psychomusical war between Jimi and Mitch.

Noel Redding's role is as the keeper of the beat, the basic bedrock times that the band returns to periodically throughout its excursions. In this way, the Experience functioned more as a jazz trio, although the comparisons to the Who and Cream are obvious. Redding's bass occasionally functions as a second melodic instrument, too, but its most important role is to keep the entire Experience tethered within planetary orbit—otherwise, it might slip past our ability to comprehend it at all.



117 CHURCH ROAD, BARNES, W11
Tel. 817444 791

Records Limited
39 GARD STREET
W1
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Purple Haze
- Jesus Saves

Purple Haze... Boy and us now
Is it pleasure or is it
pain -
Down On the ~~ceiling~~ ceiling
looking up at the
Dais... See my Body painted
Blues and red -
I see fetus on births
~~Why is it so hard~~
pointing at a time...
Rush through space...
My Hair is Blowing in their minds
~~Through the Haze~~
I see 1000 crosses
Scratched in the



The roles of Eddie Kramer and Chas Chandler as engineer and producer were vital but too complex to summarize fairly (for Kramer and McDermott's book, *Muskie: Getting The Record Straight* or Charles Shear Murray's *Crosstown Traffic*). Nevertheless, it must be said that some of the conceptual ideas clearly emanated from Chas, and that without Eddie's know-how, sensitivity and imagination behind the board, the Hendrix sound would have been lost altogether—not just an engineer would have agreed to try to tape this kind of extravaganzas, let alone pull it off.

Yet in the end, it all comes back to Jimi. His vision, his music, his guitar playing and finally, for me, his greatness or experience expressed in terms of profound love and a deeper sense of tragedy than he's usually granted. When he sighs, "Oh, there ain't no life nowhere," he is desiring what he is set against—what he means to get straight. When he requests, "If you can just get your mind together, then come on across to me," he offers love of the most profound kind, a form of brotherhood that denies nothing, including the carnal.

In his discovery of courage amidst a field of despair, in his invocation of celebratory rock'n'roll in the face of full human tragedy, in his belief that love could transform us but only if we took the great risk of "coming across" to one another, Jimi Hendrix placed himself not only among the great rock'n'rollers, and the great bluesmen—you can practically hear Robert Johnson's moaned "And the days keep wonderin' me, there's a faithful on my back"—but among the great African-American artists, the great American artists, the great artists.

In 1957, James Baldwin wrote, in sentences that stand as nothing much less than prophetic of this music, "He and his boys up there were reaping it new, at the risk of ruin, destruction, madness, and death, in order to find new ways to make us listen. For, while the tale of how we suffer, and how we are delighted, and how we may triumph it is never new, it always must be heard. There isn't any other tale to tell, it's the only light we've got in all this darkness." ("Sonny's Blues")

Jimi Hendrix brought light to our darkness, so much so that it half-blinded us to the full dimensions of his accomplishments. But we have time to understand it now, for the potency of his flame is such that it instantly ignited a sonic revolution, that it altered as the spark the direction of a stylistic revolution already in progress. Indeed, it is so powerful that it burns as brightly and powerfully after three decades as it did the day the match was struck. There may be music greater than the music here, but we will have to journey where Jimi went ultimately before we can hear it.

DAVE MARSH



THE Jimi Hendrix Experience

THE JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE

JIMI HENDRIX

Guitar and Vocal

Born Seattle, Washington

November 27, 1942. Left school early and joined the Army Airborne, but was injured out with a broken ankle and an injured back. Started hitchhiking around the Southern States, guitar pickin'.

One night one of the Ray Brothers heard him playing and offered him a place in their band. "Yeah, I'll gig. May as well, man, sleeping outside between them tall tenements was hell. Rat running all across your chest, cockroaches stealin' your last candy bar from your very pockets." But he soon turned in his silk stage suit and matching puter boots and headed once more for Nashville.

A tour came through town headed by B.B. King, Sam Cooke, Solomon Burke, Chuck Jackson, and Jackie Wilson. Jim managed to join the show and toured all over the States, backing these great artists, learning much of his artistry on the way. One day he missed the tour bus and found himself stranded in Kansas City, penniless. He scraped together enough money to make it to Atlanta, Georgia, where he joined the Little Richard package tour, again touring all over, finally playing with Ike and Tina Turner on the West Coast. When the tour arrived in New York Jim left Little Richard and became one of Joey Dee's Starliners, at a time when this band was big news internationally. In August 1966 Jim went solo with a backing band, playing in Greenwich Village for the princely sum of fifteen dollars a night.

Ex Animal Chas Chandler and Mike Jeffery, the Animal's Manager persuaded him to come to England, and he arrived in September, since which time he has already excited many audiences up and down the country.

"I came to England, picked out the two best musicians, the best equipment, and all we are trying to do now is create, create, create, music, our own personal sound, our own personal being..."

MITCH MITCHELL, Drummer

Mitch is a product of Arts Educational and The Corona Stage School. He first joined the Coronas, Chris Sandford's backing group. "Not Too Little, Not Too Much" became a hit but the group disbanded due to Chris's many acting commitments. Mitch then had a year's spell with George Fane's Blue Flames, which lasted until October 1966. A chance meeting with Chas Chandler in November last year resulted in Mitch joining The Experience.

Young and refreshing in ideas but truly a well seasoned professional drummer Mitch plays a key role in the sound of this exciting trio.

NOEL REDDING

Bass Guitar and Vocal

Noel has been playing guitar with various groups since he left school five years ago. Noel formed "The Loving Kind" in October 1965. Unhappy at the group's lack of recording success, and being not a little bit ambitious, Noel went his own way and attended an audition Jimi was holding in October 1966. He was persuaded to change from guitar to bass guitar, which he managed to do very successfully, making a strong contribution to the driving rhythm behind Jimi's extraordinary lead guitar.



AS THE GREATEST, MOST INFLUENTIAL DEBUT ALBUM EVER RELEASED, Are You Experienced

Is sort of the musical equivalent of the Big Bang that scientists believe originated the universe. In both cases, many generations later, the world is still trying to absorb, organize and make sense of what that initiating event spawned forth. No other rock artist has, from the outset, violated so many rules while completely fulfilling so many expectations. The proof is that more than forty years after it first hit our times, *Are You Experienced* still sounds not only fresh but startling. That this is true of Jimi Hendrix as a guitarist everyone knows, and it would be silly to think that the case needed to be made again, but just to summarize: Forever after the issuance of the first Hendrix album, the electric guitar was a different instrument, with different sonic possibilities, tonal characteristics, even physical properties (just for starters, Jimi immediately made it clear you could play more than just the strings and fretboard).

Are You Experienced was important as an album, however, for more reasons than just Jimi Hendrix's guitar playing. Like any truly great work, it succeeded on several levels, most notably, by featuring great compositions, played by a great band, and by using the past as a palette from which to create its seeming future. The album's moods are multiple: brooding, joyous, humorous, serious. Its musical modes include flat-out rock'n'roll, pure blues, psychedelic extravaganzas, and within its own rules, elements of jazz and modernist music too. It is a marvel of recording, with layers of sound nevertheless reaching into songs that could, for the most part, be played live onstage. The singing is great rock'n'roll, not a sweet voice but one that has learned the lessons that deep study of the blues and Bob Dylan have to teach. And it is driven by a vision, of freedom and of danger, the equal of any in rock'n'roll.