







JIMI HENDRIX HAD BARELY PUT THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON *ARE YOU EXPERIENCED*,

the group's remarkable 1967 debut album, before he began recording new songs for what would ultimately become *Axis: Bold As Love*. Less than nine months had passed since Chas Chandler had brought Jimi Hendrix to London in September 1966. With Chandler installed as his manager and producer, the two formed the Jimi Hendrix Experience with drummer Mitch Mitchell and bassist Noel Redding. On the strength of early singles like "Hey Joe," "Purple Haze," and "The Wind Cries Mary," the Experience had conquered England and Europe. The group's stunning performance at the June 1967 Monterey Pop Festival and the subsequent release of *Are You Experienced* won over American fans and clearly illustrated the magnitude of the trio's capabilities. While touring and other commitments would delay further *Axis: Bold As Love* recording sessions for the new album until October 1967, the unquenchable creative fire burning within the belly of the Experience would soon produce another gem. Avidly gathered and explored by the public, the thirteen majestic songs of *Axis: Bold As Love* proved that Jimi Hendrix was no one album wonder.

Not satisfied with mining the same vein that had yielded the mother lode of *Are You Experienced*, the Experience kicked off their sophomore effort with a novelty step into the science fiction milieu that Jimi loved. "EXP" featured a faux radio announcer, played by drummer Mitch Mitchell, interviewing Jimi posing as Paul Corusoe, an expert on alien life. The track launched thirty-eight minutes of some of the most brilliant rock to be etched in vinyl the entire year. It contains a phenomenal group of songs. "Spanish Castle Magic," "You Got Me Floatin'," the title track, "Bold As Love," and the now standard, "Little Wing." Few would attempt to argue the album's timelessness. The range of emotions and styles expressed throughout *Axis* equals those found on *Are You Experienced*, but there is a different quality about them. The time between the initial sessions for the "Hey Joe" single to the final touches on "She's So Fine" for *Axis* was only a year. The Experience had spent the time well. From the full out rockers to softer poetic outings, *Axis: Bold As Love* was chock full of well crafted pop songs.

AXIS: BOLD AS LOVE • THE



Chas Chandler's contribution in that vein should not be overlooked. Chas had learned a great deal about pop music structure as the bassist for the Animals, one of the most successful groups of the British Invasion. His knowledge was in full display on *Are You Experienced*, where he was clearly in charge. It is to his credit that he recognized Jimi's remarkable growth as a musician and composer. By the Axis sessions he and Jimi were equal partners in creative matters. His influence reined in some of Jimi's more extravagant impulses that later reemerged with new discipline on *Electric Ladyland*. The longest song on Axis, "If 6 Was 9" runs 5:32. Of the other eleven songs, only "One Rainy Wish" and "Bold As Love" exceeded the three minute AM top-forty radio barrier of the day. Unquestionably, Chas had carried his message well.

Just as important, in the history of the Jimi Hendrix Experience was how the band reacted to their incredible initial successes. Many bands have found early success a distraction and a recipe for dissolution. The Axis days for Jimi and the Experience, on the other hand, were some of the happiest in the short tempestuous life of the group. That joy translated easily to disc and was clearly apparent throughout the sessions for the album. The trio created a union that, on the surface, might have seemed unlikely, but one that used its disparate influences to form a union of three with a single soul.

Mitch Mitchell brought his love of jazz, and Philly Joe Jones in particular, to the table, and his adroit stickmanship and machine gun fills reflect that interest throughout Axis. For example, Mitch's breaks on "Wait Until Tomorrow" come right out of the hard bop book. His brush work (at Noel's suggestion) on "Up From The Skies" would be just as at home in a smoky jazz piece as on this funky science fiction rocker.

Noel Redding was a converted guitar player, and brought a guitarist's sensibilities and deftness to the bass. His style pushed Jimi and Mitch into a tight union normally reserved for the tightest of bassist and drummer combinations. This coalition was a key element on Axis. Listen to the delicate interplay within "One Rainy Wish" founded on that well-established rhythmic rapport. With "She's So Fine," Noel's own composition, the bassist assumed the lead vocal, leading Jimi and Mitch through this charged rocker. From start to finish, Noel's offerings were an integral part of this fine album.

Jimi's own passions involved the great bluesmen such as Buddy Guy, soulsters like Curtis Mayfield and jazzmen like Wes Montgomery. Those influences are apparent all through the Axis: *Bold As Love* album sessions. The soft rhythmic flow of "Little Wing" bears Curtis' imprint and in Jimi's opening rhythmic line to "Wait Until Tomorrow" we hear him tipping his hat to the R&B and Soul riffs he learned in his days on the chitlin' circuit. Ironically, though Jimi heard the intricate line clearly enough in his head, he had difficulty reproducing it in the studio, according to the engineer on the sessions, Eddie Kramer. He obviously got it right eventually.

SES



JIMI HENDRIX EXPERIENCE



I just want to talk
 to you - I want do you
 No harm - I just want to
 know about your different
 lives ^{it is here} on ~~your~~ people farm
 I heard you have brothers
 your families live in
 cages tall and cold. and
 some stay there ^{and get} past the
 age of old - is this true ^{man}
 please let me talk to you
 (Guitar & Guitar, Boston)

I just want to know about
 the rooms behind your minds
 do I see a vacuum there
 or am I going blind, or
 is it ~~the~~ remaining ~~of~~ ^{of} vibrations from echos long ago





Kramer was another important part of the Axis effort. He and Jimi had, by this time, forged an important kinship. With Chandler's full confidence and support, Kramer was astute enough to recognize Jimi's understanding of mixing and catered to Hendrix's suggestions. Axis' *Bold As Love* was his second album with the Experience and he had developed an uncanny ability to grasp what Jimi had in his mind and was willing to work doggedly to achieve it on tape. Jimi, especially when discussing subtleties of sound, would often describe what he wanted to hear in terms of colors. Eddie was able to develop a palette that Jimi could paint with. And when Jimi said he dreamed of having his guitar sound like he was playing it underwater, Kramer, along with fellow Olympic studio engineer George Chkiantz, developed the technique of phasing to make that dream come true. The coda at the end of the title track illustrates a remarkable use of the technique.

Axis was not an album which could be easily translated into live performance, nor was it intended to be. In the first place, the songs had not been road tested like those on *Are You Experienced*. They were built from the ground up in the studio and the various effects that were added to the album (including a glockenspiel on "Little Wing") were not intended to be part of the group's thrilling live gigs. In fact only "Spanish Castle Magic" and sometimes "Little Wing" were ever regularly performed by the group. In Jimi's mind the two areas were completely separate. On stage, Jimi's message was entirely singular and he made the most of his opportunity to connect with his audience. The recording studio required a different focus, a different way of communicating through his music.

Axils: Bold As Love almost became a failure to communicate. After deciding on the thirteen tracks which would make the final cut, the firm of Hendrix, Kramer and Chandler began the laborious task of creating a final mix. After finishing the job in the early hours of Halloween, 1967, Hendrix and Chas Chandler took the master tapes home to the apartment they shared. Somehow, the unthinkable happened. Jimi misplaced the mixes for the album's first side. Since the tapes had been removed before any safeties were made, their loss was truly a disaster. The mixes had been made from four-track originals and their creation had been a performance unto itself. Needless to say no one was happy with the task that faced them, remixing the half inch tapes and trying to recreate what they had finished once already. With the lucrative Christmas season fast approaching, and the album already scheduled for release, the mixing had to be accomplished in one night.

"If 6 Was 9" was the one track they just couldn't seem to get right. Each attempt had the team scratching their heads knowing that the sound wasn't right. Despite a number of attempts, neither Chandler, Hendrix, nor Kramer were sure as to how they had achieved the earlier mix. Exasperated, they dispatched Noel in a cab to find a 7 1/2 ips, 3 inch reel containing a rough mix from June that the bassist had at his apartment. The tape turned out to be badly wrinkled and needed to be ironed in order to get it through the studio machine. The mix was finally accomplished though, and beautifully so. From then on, the high praise Chandler and Kramer enjoyed for their labor has always brought on a sardonic smile. "If you only knew," Chandler would often laugh.

For the listener, the extra effort was well worth it. With *Axis: Bold As Love*, Jimi and company had created a magnificent and groundbreaking album that has stood the test of time. It remains not only a faithful document of its time, but it is just as relevant today as it was over forty years ago. Since its initial release, *Axis: Bold As Love* has remained both a critical and fan favorite. Though Jimi has been gone longer than he lived, we are fortunate to live in a time in which recordings keep his genius at our call. *Axis* is definitive proof both of that genius and the magnitude of our loss.

Jym Fahey



