

# The Essential Hendrix

AN A-Z COMPENDIUM

FIRST EDITION

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# INTRODUCTION

This book was conceived as an alternative means of exploring histories related to legendary guitarist, Jimi Hendrix. Typically, discussions of personnel and places associated with Hendrix end with his death in September 1970, often leaving a narrative void after that cataclysmic moment disrupted popular music history. There also remains a need for further examination of connections between what occurred during his lifetime and what occurred later with, for example, a multiplicity of lawsuits, the shift of estate control to Experience Hendrix LLC®, the sale of previously unreleased recordings, and the reshaping of Hendrix’s legacy through later books and films. In addition, musicians connected to Hendrix extended their careers well beyond his passing, often with interesting developments emerging in those later phases.

## How the Book is Organized

Most Hendrix books include fragmented references to related individuals rather than assembled, cohesive overviews of their connections to the guitarist or their complete careers inclusive of circumstances that preceded and followed their time either in or around the Hendrix vortex. The alphabetical arrangement of this book intends to simplify access to the histories of band members, engineers, producers, studios, and various associates without encountering the complexities of integrating data from disembodied indexes that might still leave crucial gaps unfilled. Summaries of the various commercially available documentaries, biopics, and product merchandising are addressed separately to facilitate easier reading and analysis. The book’s references are selective (focusing on essential content as implied in its title) since it would be physically impractical to create biographical entries for every person involved in Jimi Hendrix’s career. Furthermore, locating verifiable information proves more challenging in certain cases, and the book gives preference to accuracy rather than supposition.

There is a separate section titled “Hendrix on Film” that discusses the various documentaries on the guitarist, and the sheer volume of material necessitates specialized treatment. The commercialization of his image and music through merchandising is addressed in the segment “Selling Hendrix.” That section considers representative examples demonstrating how his legacy is sustained or undermined by usage in the commercial consumer mainstream and the implications of these circumstances.

Following the alphabetical entries, similar separate segments are included on “Designing Hendrix” featuring an interview with Experience Hendrix graphic artist Phil Yarnall, “Psychedelic Fashion,” and “Hendrix Tribute Albums.” The book’s entries provide analysis and historical contexts rather than merely assembling facts, and this interpretive approach attempts to heighten the value of the overall work.

### KEY TO FEATURES WITHIN CATEGORIES

- **Song titles are marked with quotation marks**, like Hendrix’s cover of Dylan’s “All Along the Watchtower.”
- **Biographical entries are marked by name**, followed by date of birth where such information is reliably available, and date of death where applicable.
- **Albums are noted by title, followed by track listings**. Selected songs receive individual book entries, but these are restricted to some of Hendrix’s best-known works. The exhaustive cataloging of bootleg releases, vinyl record matrix numbers, track credit discrepancies and other material by dedicated Hendrix fanzine writers during the past few decades is not repeated in this volume. This book is aimed at the fan whose interest does not necessarily extend to the minutia so vital to devoted Hendrix fanatics.
- **Music groups are followed by a listing of band members** inclusive of references to personnel changes.
- **Recording studios** are discussed primarily in terms of their relationship to Jimi Hendrix, though additional historical information is also provided. The book does not attempt to discuss every studio in which Hendrix recorded, but makes particular separate reference to some locations where especially important works took shape (e.g., CBS Studios in London, Hendrix’s own Electric Lady Studios in New York).
- **Record labels** that played prominent roles are listed among the alphabetical entries to allow readers to consider the place occupied by Hendrix and his music in the respective histories of these companies.
- An alphabetical entry titled “**Drugs**” is included since Hendrix’s death was chemically-related with his overdose of sleeping pills. Many biographies mistakenly attribute his demise to a conventional drug overdose, and this entry examines some of the various roles that drug consumption allegedly played during his life.
- In many instances, **specific published sources are cited to provide readers with additional reference points for the entries**. However, consistent source citation throughout the text would certainly interfere with the reading experience, and an extensive bibliography is provided to facilitate independent verification of information.
- All quoted dollar amounts are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise stated.
- The American date format is used, citing month, day, then year.

### Note for Instructors

This book restructures the often rigidly chronological accounts of Jimi Hendrix’s life and career to reveal other historical paths traversed by those whose lives intersected with the iconic guitarist. In so doing, the entries magnify the impact of Hendrix on their own careers or businesses in the cases of recording studios or record labels. The alphabetical A–Z approach allows for greater depth in historical exploration and assembly of information, explaining how many of the individuals discussed became part of Hendrix’s journey from oblivion to global stardom.

A key challenge posed by separating these multiple narrative strands is ensuring that students have a sense of the larger scheme of events unifying the entries. They are expected to have at least a general knowledge of popular music history incorporating the late 20th century, including an overview of the highlights related to Jimi Hendrix. The following simplified summary is intended to assist in this regard,

ensuring that all students and instructors have a basic reference point around which to structure the class and inclusion of entries:

### **Hendrix's Historical Background**

Following years of unstable family life in Seattle and numerous stints as a struggling touring musician after his discharge from the Army, Jimi Hendrix's first major career break after years as a sideman occurred when British former Animals bassist Chas Chandler witnessed his performance in New York in 1966. Immediately certain of Hendrix's talent and potential, Chandler arranged to bring the still-unknown guitarist to England to commence a recording career in a quickly-formed trio that began with the 1967 LP *Are You Experienced* and a series of three hit singles in Britain. Hendrix's conquest of America began after the debut album's European release, with his incendiary set at the Monterey Pop Festival, followed by the appearance of *Are You Experienced* in the U.S. With career foundations in place, the Jimi Hendrix Experience began work on its second LP, *Axis: Bold as Love*, released in Britain in late 1967 and in America in early 1968. This record established Hendrix as an artist to be taken seriously and was a critical and commercial success. In the midst of badly scheduled, incessant touring required to generate revenue to meet expenses, Hendrix then embarked on an epic double album, *Electric Ladyland*, on which guest musicians were prominent participants, leading to the departure of Experience bassist Noel Redding. The success of the experimental album on both sides of the Atlantic presented a new challenge to find yet another creative direction. When offered the headline slot at the now-legendary 1969 Woodstock Festival, Hendrix performed with his transitional and short-lived six-piece Gypsy Sun & Rainbows unit, which never recorded its own album. His last official release was issued in 1970 as part of the all-black Band of Gypsys trio that recorded a live album to meet ongoing legal obligations dating back to an ill-advised contract signing in 1965. In September 1970, Hendrix died after taking an overdose of sleeping pills, leaving his musical catalog and business affairs in utter disarray without a will. Management issues, contractual problems, and financial mishandling by others undermined what should have been the economic stability of Hendrix's career, creating the platform for decades of legal problems.

The preceding highly compressed summary certainly leaves several aspects underexplored, but further discussion is the very reason for this book's existence. *The Essential Hendrix* is the result of more than a decade of teaching about the guitar legend's life, career, and commercial afterlife, but as more archival material surfaces in either new or repackaged forms, the stories and analyses contained in the book will themselves undergo their own remixing and remastering in later editions.

### **Notes for Students**

As you explore Jimi Hendrix's history with your instructor, the alphabetical entries in this book provide you with additional information that can enrich your encounter with the guitarist's career. It's quite difficult to locate any single source that presents a sufficiently comprehensive overview that gives readers comprehensive insights into the people, places, and events populating Hendrix's complex world, and *The Essential Hendrix* attempts to compile, interpret, and reassess many writings and facts.

While your readings will be assigned by your instructor, this book readily invites investigation of other sections before they are assigned. Each entry provides a chronology of events, both predating and following Hendrix's death where applicable. This allows for broad historical assessment that is not solely limited to Hendrix's lifetime, allowing readers to consider the transformative impact of working with the guitarist for many individuals and businesses.

The alphabetical structure is designed to simplify gathering historical data, usually broadly scattered across text content. In one reading of an entry, you can obtain a substantial summary that helps

to explain the role of that person, place, or enterprise within and beyond Jimi Hendrix's career. Some entries (e.g., Experience Hendrix) are far more lengthy because of complex historical circumstances and an abundance of verifiable, relevant information. In some instances, entries are subdivided so that, for example, the discussion of an album cover is clearly identifiable apart from consideration of the musical content.

The featured entries on albums are restricted to official label or estate releases (and their respective record companies), bypassing the countless bootlegs that are still continually issued across the globe. Song entries are quite selective, focused on some of Hendrix's best-known works, while also leaving room for student presentations on other released songs.

Other entries feature individuals not normally viewed as major figures in Hendrix's world, such as photographers and graphic art designers. Yet, these individuals helped shape the image of Jimi Hendrix for decades with the images they captured or created during his short career, and therefore they justify inclusion. Note that out of narrative necessity not all sources are cited within each entry, but a comprehensive bibliography is included near the end of the book for reference purposes.

The history of Jimi Hendrix has, in fact, never ended despite his death in September 1970. Each new catalog release or reissue of an album sheds new light on his creative path, sometimes also including new information or fresh critical perspectives in accompanying liner notes. As a result, new entries and elements may need to be included in later editions to ensure that more recent events related to Hendrix's history are documented.

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# A

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## “All Along the Watchtower”

Despite the acclaim for his album work and his sought-after live performances, Jimi Hendrix’s success was rarely reflected on the American singles charts. His cover of Bob Dylan’s “All Along the Watchtower” was Hendrix’s only Top Forty hit, peaking at number 20 in late 1968, though it reached number 5 in the U.K. as one of his five Top Ten singles there.

Recording engineer Eddie Kramer once commented that Jimi Hendrix “had a magical ability, bar none, to take other people’s material and make it his own,” and this landmark recording more than justifies his assertion. Dylan’s sparse original version appears on his late 1967 album *John Wesley Harding*, featuring harmonica and acoustic guitar supporting the legend’s usual nasal vocals. The sonic disparity between his recording and Hendrix’s is dramatic, to say the least. As the British *Sound On Sound* magazine suggested, Hendrix’s addition of guitar solos infused the song with a thematically appropriate incisiveness.

Hendrix’s fascination with Dylan can be traced back to at least 1965, when he spent money allocated for food on a copy of Dylan’s *Highway 61 Revisited*. At the time, Hendrix was living with girlfriend Fayne Pridgeon in New York, but as author Keith Shadwick noted, “The timing of Hendrix’s first spark of interest in Dylan is not known. ...” Dylan’s haunting song provided Hendrix with

a lyrically imaginative escape from the trite romantic subject matter that dominated popular music singles of the era. And as numerous other writers have observed, with his atypical singing voice, Dylan’s commercial success was reassuring to Hendrix who was still developing his own vocal style.

One of the catalysts for “All Along the Watchtower” was more immediately relevant, with Dylan composing the song as an acerbic response to what he considered to be an insulting royalty rate being offered by Columbia Records® for his services. At that stage, Hendrix probably had enough ongoing career control conflicts with his manager, Michael Jeffery, to fuel an entire concept album. The guitarist had been constantly touring and had to repeatedly interrupt his creative flow in the recording studio to fulfill gigs set up by Jeffery. The inner stress may have exploded on January 3, 1968, when he wrecked his room at the Hotel Opalen in Gothenburg, Sweden, spending a night in prison as a result. According to published sources, despite his major commercial success in the previous year, Hendrix’s bank account at the beginning of 1968 was barely more than £3 (less than US \$5 in today’s money).

The song’s lyrical portrait, combining material dishonesty with apocalyptic overtones clearly appealed to Hendrix who was grappling with his growing sense of entrapment within the pop star machinery, and felt the need to imbue his music

with deeper significance. Accounts of the fleeting meetings between Dylan and Hendrix lack definitive verification, but there's no doubt that a mutual admiration existed between them.

"All Along the Watchtower" was reportedly recorded at the suggestion of Hendrix's London girlfriend, Kathy Etchingham. Although production of the 1968 *Electric Ladyland* album is credited to Hendrix, Chas Chandler also produced several songs on the record including "All Along the Watchtower," and he was quite unhappy at being excluded from the credits even though he had withdrawn from the Hendrix camp by the time the album was released. Hendrix began recording his version on January 21, 1968 at Olympic Studios in London after listening to tapes of recent Dylan recordings received from Dylan's manager, Albert Grossman. Both Dylan and Hendrix had the same publicist, Michael Goldstein, and Grossman was reportedly interested in having other artists cover Dylan's compositions in order to generate more revenue. According to second engineer Andy Johns, Hendrix repeatedly listened to recordings of Dylan's songs in the studio. Although it can't be certain that the inspiration to record "All Along the Watchtower" was a direct result of this, it's easy to imagine Hendrix consuming Dylan's mysticism and admiring his enigmatic, elusive persona.

Traffic guitarist Dave Mason was hired to play twelve-string acoustic guitar on the song using an instrument owned by Glyn Johns (the famous producer and brother of Hendrix producer and engineer Andy Johns). Mason couldn't immediately deliver what Hendrix envisioned and according to engineer Eddie Kramer about twenty-seven takes of the song were recorded before Hendrix was satisfied with the result. Rolling Stones member Brian Jones, who had introduced Hendrix at the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival, unsuccessfully attempted to play piano and then percussion on the session, apparently being too intoxicated to perform coherently. Multiple alternative mixes, (some in mono) or incomplete takes of the song with and without Jones, have appeared on numerous bootlegs that are more

familiar to hardcore collectors than the general public. In some sense, "All Along the Watchtower" had its own ominous implications for the future of the Experience, with Hendrix further alienating an already disgruntled Noel Redding by playing bass on the song himself. That overdub replaced an earlier attempt at the bass part by Dave Mason.

Capturing the song on tape coincided with rapid developments in multi-track recording technology. Once the backing track was completed, the sessions were relocated from Olympic Studios in London to the Record Plant in New York. There, the finished version ended up on a 16-track machine, having begun in London on a 4-track machine, with further overdubbing on a 12-track machine in New York (sources differ on this point: producer Eddie Kramer has said it was finally recorded on 16 tracks; Hendrix recalled finishing on a 12-track machine). Engineer Tony Bongiovi (cousin of rock star Jon Bon Jovi) recalls Hendrix's perfectionistic vision for the song resulting in endless re-recording of overdubs and more than fifteen different mixes. According to Hendrix biographer John McDermott, 24 takes were recorded, as well as two more takes added to a four-track master tape. The relative abundance of tracks didn't prevent some parts (including Hendrix's own guitar work) being purposely erased at his direction to create space for an improved effort. The engineer Gary Kellgren attempted further mixes at the Record Plant on July 3, 1968, but according to McDermott, Hendrix preferred a previous mix completed by Eddie Kramer. All of Hendrix's vocals were recorded at the Record Plant, while Kramer and Hendrix mixed the track together.

The song's American release was issued on September 4, 1968 (with the British release occurring in October), entering the *Billboard* chart at number 66 on September 21 and out-selling all of Hendrix's previous U.S. singles releases combined. It was inevitably included on the American version of the 1969 compilation LP *Smash Hits* that reached number six. Although Hendrix's version is by far the best known,

he was not the first to record a cover of this Dylan composition. In March 1968, it was an A-side for the British pop act Nashville Teens (best known for the 1964 hit “Tobacco Road”), but it failed to chart on either side of the Atlantic, lacking the haunting mystique and intensity of Hendrix’s rendering.

Dylan wholly embraced Hendrix’s reinterpretation of his song, and was influenced to perform it thereafter as though the cover was the original version. He’s believed to have only started playing “All Along the Watchtower” live in 1974 (as captured on the platinum album *Before the Flood* recorded with The Band), four years after Hendrix’s demise. Dylan’s revised effort clearly underlines the reality that the song is now most closely associated with Hendrix. When giving his February 2015 MusiCares Person of the Year speech, Dylan paid emphatic tribute to the guitarist, stating, “He took some small songs of mine that *nobody* paid any attention to and brought them up into the outer limits of the stratosphere, turned them all into classics. I have to thank Jimi, too. I wish he was here.” No doubt Dylan’s praise also encompassed “Like a Rolling Stone” (despite its commercial success as a 1965 single), which Hendrix powerfully covered at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967.

“All Along the Watchtower” has developed a life of its own, and the aura of urgency transmitted through the introduction and the opening line, “There must be some kind of way out of here,” makes it a natural backdrop for protagonists seeking escape from physical, circumstantial, or psychological confinement, even when it’s only fictional and serves unambiguously commercial objectives. In early 2015, the French fragrance company Chanel debuted a one-minute TV ad for a men’s cologne, licensing Hendrix’s recording of “All Along the Watchtower” as the soundtrack to a largely surrealistic narrative. The moody dark blue graphic tone of the Bleu De Chanel ad is well matched by what has become the definitive interpretation of Dylan’s song with a performance that sounds entirely fresh and contemporary. In

August 2015, the song was included in the official trailer for the October-released sci-fi feature film *The Martian* starring Matt Damon. Hendrix’s music was also featured in the soundtrack for the epic 2017 Ken Burns TV documentary series *The Vietnam War*, and the tenth episode uses “All Along the Watchtower” to accompany the chaotic military and civilian exodus from the country. The guitarist’s obsessive attention to detail in recording this song may have been tedious for his studio collaborators at the time, but clearly it still resonates in ways that more than justify Hendrix’s perfectionism.

## **Allen Brothers: Arthur Russell Allen & Albert Raymond Allen a.k.a. Tunde Ra & Taharqa Aleem**

b. February 14, 1946  
d. (Arthur Allen/Tunde Ra Aleem) August 14, 2014

Later known as the Aleems when they became Black Muslims, the Allen twins were born in Harlem, New York and this remained their primary location. In their occasional collaborative roles on Hendrix’s recordings they were referred to as the Ghetto Fighters, with one notable example being their background vocal appearance on “Freedom” for Hendrix’s posthumous *The Cry of Love* LP (1971). Previously in an unsuccessful mid-1960s recording act called the International G.T.O.s, the brothers functioned as cultural conduits for Hendrix’s forays into the urban black world, a realm within which he was largely a stranger. Despite his undoubted R&B chitlin’ circuit performance credentials as a backing musician, Hendrix’s natural inclination towards the unconventional made it difficult for him to fit into existing African American musical and social norms. As numerous writers affirm, the Allen twins facilitated Hendrix’s cultural integration

efforts while further nurturing his wild side by consuming LSD with him.

Their association with Hendrix may have begun as early as 1965, and the twins had shared a house with him and one of his then-girlfriends, Fayne Pridgeon (a.k.a. Fay, though her full name is Lithofayne Pridgeon), whom Arthur Allen subsequently married. When Hendrix returned to New York to perform his first gigs there with the Experience, the twins were skeptical about the guitarist's claims of achieving success in England despite the fact that he brought a copy of his 1967 breakthrough LP *Are You Experienced* with him to America. After first hearing the record, the brothers were disappointed, expecting a typical R&B sound. However, a second listening led them to conclude that "the album was pure genius." Hendrix later told *Rolling Stone*® magazine that he planned to write songs with the Allen brothers and produce them, though this scenario never fully materialized. The brothers did however help organize Hendrix's United Block Association® benefit concert in Harlem on September 5, 1969. In the *Band of Gypsies* DVD documentary, Hendrix roadie Gerry Stickells (d. 2019) suggested that the Allen brothers were co-opting the guitarist, pushing him to support the Black Panther movement and the anti-white establishment social militancy that it represented. The twins maintained that manager Michael Jeffery did not want Hendrix in an all-black outfit such as the Band of Gypsies, given the likelihood that such an alliance would be both commercially detrimental and racially divisive compared to the multiracial Experience line-up with two white English musicians.

Continuing occasional work with Hendrix, they sang background vocals on the studio version of "Izabella" recorded on November 7, 1969 at the Record Plant in New York and on "Dolly Dagger" at Electric Lady Studios on August 18, 1970. In 1969, the twins had begun rhythm track work on a song called "Mojo Man" at the famous Muscle Shoals Studios in Alabama with a plan to include the song on a

proposed Ghetto Fighters album. The twins had auditioned the song while visiting Hendrix in Los Angeles, and after returning to New York he reminded them about the track, adding guitar parts in either July or August 1970 at Electric Lady Studios. However, following his sudden death in September, "Mojo Man" was consigned to the vaults and remained unheard by the public for decades. Underscoring their years of friendship, the twins attended Hendrix's October funeral in Seattle, and material they recorded with him appeared on the first posthumous albums, *The Cry of Love* (1971), *Rainbow Bridge* (1971), and *War Heroes* (1972).

Remastering the recording after the estate's rights reverted to Jimi's family in 1995, a plan to include "Mojo Man" on the 2004 various artist *Power of Soul* compilation album was aborted, then it was scheduled for release on November 27, 2011. The recording did eventually emerge on the hit 2013 compilation of previously unreleased Hendrix recordings, *People, Hell and Angels*. Fitting into the type of rock and soul groove territory so well occupied by the Band of Gypsies, Jimi's parts on "Mojo Man" that were originally overdubbed to a cassette recording were blended into the master tape by long-time Hendrix engineer Eddie Kramer who also mixed it. As the song's credits indicate, the contributors on bass, horns, drums, and percussion are unknown, but Albert Allen (Taharqa Aleem) provided the vocals. In America, *People, Hell and Angels* debuted on the *Billboard* album chart at number 2 on March 23, 2013, while eventually peaking at number 39 in Britain.

In the twins' post-Hendrix careers, they changed their musical identity from the Ghetto Fighters to Prana People in 1972, releasing an ambitious eponymous soul fusion debut LP in 1977 without commercial success (at this stage they bore the names Talib and Zayeed Aleem). The record's cult following was evidenced with its release on CD in early 2018. They established their Nia record label and the 12" disco single "Hooked On Your Love" (under the collective

name of “Aleem”) is believed to be the label’s first single, released in 1979. Including background vocals from the later-famous Luther Vandross, it was re-released the following year by Panorama Records under the name “The Fantastic Aleems.” With sporadic singles releases mostly in the 1980s, the Aleems proffered their brand of electro-infused dance club rhythms featuring the lead vocals of Leroy Burgess on R&B chart tracks such as “Release Yourself” (1984). The mid-1980s saw the group switch from their independent label to Atlantic Records®, culminating in the *Casually Formal* LP (1986), the *Shock* album (1987) and four *Billboard* R&B chart singles. After 1987 the group evaporated, with Tunde Ra Aleem releasing singles on both independent and major labels into the early 1990s. Much of the Aleems’ catalog was reissued in the early 2000s inclusive of previously unreleased material, and they founded the non-profit organization Hip-Hop for Humanity in 2000.

Tunde Ra Aleem (Arthur Allen) died in August 2014 from a terminal lung disease, although his initial 2006 prognosis reportedly only gave him a few months to live. In posthumous documentaries such as *A Film About Jimi Hendrix* (1973) and *Band of Gypsies: Live at the Fillmore East* (1999), the Allen brothers provide rare perspectives on Hendrix’s complex relationship with black America. They suggest that the *Band of Gypsies* album was part of the guitarist’s conscious effort to musically connect with black audiences without alienating himself from the white market. The brothers were certainly first-hand witnesses to Hendrix’s evolution from New York misfit to international hipster.

In 2014, the twins published a raw memoir, *Jimi Hendrix & The Ghetto Fighters in Harlem World*, that attempts to tell the stories of their Hendrix experiences. Unfortunately, the self-published book demonstrates a clear lack of appropriate copy editing. In November 2016, Taharqa Aleem sued Janie Hendrix over two guitars played by Jimi that he had given to the brothers. While the brothers had licensed

the guitars for exhibit display to Experience Hendrix and sold them for a reported \$30,000 in 1995 when the Aleems lacked money, the lawsuit contended that Janie Hendrix subsequently failed to honor a verbal agreement to allow Aleem to reacquire the guitars for the same amount of money. In a September 2019 verdict, the federal judge handling the case determined that the Aleems had no ownership of the guitars and had failed to present evidence that they were either iconic or historic.

## *Are You Experienced (1967)*



FIGURE A.1 The Jimi Hendrix Experience in Helsinki, Finland, in 1967.

### TRACKS:

**British version** (No question mark included in title):

Side 1

Foxy Lady / Manic Depression / Red House / Can You See Me / Love or Confusion / I Don’t Live Today

Side 2

May This Be Love / Fire / 3rd Stone from the Sun / Remember / Are You Experienced (No question mark)

**American version** (No question mark included in title, but added to title track):

## Side 1

Purple Haze / Manic Depression / Hey Joe /  
Love or Confusion / May This Be Love / I Don't  
Live Today

## Side 2

The Wind Cries Mary / Third Stone from the Sun  
(sic) / Foxy\* Lady (sic) / Are You Experienced? (sic)  
(\*Correct spelling for the U.S. label, but different  
from the original British release that omitted  
the 'e'.)

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In popular music history, few debut albums have yielded the seismic reverberation of *Are You Experienced*. The immediacy and spontaneity of its performances may be the record's greatest assets, with producer/manager Chas Chandler estimating that it only cost "about £1,500 or something. It was done in ten days. . . ." *Are You Experienced* was first released in Britain on Friday, May 12, 1967, on Polydor Records. Hendrix was signed to Track Records in the U.K., but the label wasn't fully operational in time for the release and the company allowed its distributor's label to be used instead for the debut "Hey Joe" single released in December 1966 before the album's completion. As Chandler confirms, his lack of recording funds led him to request support from Polydor that then opened an account with London's Olympic Studios in his name to finance the ongoing sessions. Following Hendrix's triumphant Monterey Pop Festival appearance, *Are You Experienced* was issued in America by the Warner Bros.<sup>®</sup> subsidiary label Reprise on August 23, 1967. Previously, North America had been the only remaining territory not yet covered in existing label agreements, and Hendrix's management knew that the type of significant promotional money and support needed to break into that market could only come from a major label. With Atlantic Records reportedly rejecting the opportunity to sign Hendrix, Reprise stepped in offering a substantial \$40,000 advance. At the

time, this was thought to be the largest amount ever paid by the label for a new artist.

Individual label attitudes to their respective British and American audiences and the considerable gap between release dates for the debut album led to contrasting track sequences. While both versions of the album wielded significant sonic impact, transatlantic audiences were actually encountering two rather distinct records. The songs that had been hit singles in Britain—"Hey Joe," "Purple Haze," "The Wind Cries Mary"—were not included on the U.K. edition, but those tracks became part of the running order for the American version (inclusive of discrepancies in the spelling of the titles) at the expense of the bluesy "Red House," "Remember," and "Can You See Me." The contrasting track content means that any discussion of when album recording sessions began depends on which version of the record is being addressed. Since the diverse versions and disparate singles now often co-exist on officially released editions of the album, they will be largely considered here as one cohesive collection except where historical context dictates more specific treatment.

Although neither Hendrix nor Chandler wanted the singles on the album, Hendrix was known to be quite disappointed by Reprise Records' inclusion of the hits. However, since he was actually signed to manager Michael Jeffery's production company, Yameta, he had no actual decision-making power in such matters.

The 2010 American reissue compiled by Experience Hendrix merged the contents of both album versions. Collectors should note, however, that the international versions and American track sequences differ, as does the cover art with the original British design used in some territories outside of America. All seventeen tracks had previously been compiled on Polydor's 1993 reissue, but the track sequence was different, and the 2010 reissue booklet mentions that engineer Eddie Kramer and historian John McDermott "restored the original running orders." Before the American release of the LP, Track Records had

apparently been exporting copies to America, but at that time no label had yet been assigned rights to distribute Hendrix's recordings in the territory.

In both its British and American versions, the album title is not punctuated by a question mark, instead making a somewhat enigmatic statement. The record was originally released in mono, and only later in stereo, indicating that the industry was still finding its way out of what some might view as the sonic dark ages. According to one account, the phasing out of mono releases began taking place in America in 1967. However, even a mono release of *Are You Experienced* possessed enough mind-blowing power and imagination to shift the axis of popular music. With a compelling amalgam of blues and R&B-infused psychedelic rock, Hendrix raised the stakes for what an LP might attempt. It could be argued that the American version had a greater effect on first-time listeners with the inclusion at the very start of the groundbreaking "Purple Haze," as well as the British singles "Hey Joe" and "The Wind Cries Mary."

More than just Hendrix's full-length introduction as a bandleader, *Are You Experienced* represented the start of a new era of popular music in which stardom, commercial success, studio creativity, critical acclaim, and innovative virtuoso artistry could effectively co-exist. Produced by Chas Chandler, the album was assembled in parts and not as a centrally-focused cohesive work. In addition, no extensive band pre-production occurred beyond "Hey Joe," which the Experience performed live in France before making a studio recording. However, musicians who jammed with Hendrix in New York in 1966 recognized that several songs subsequently included on *Are You Experienced* were already in formative stages.

It is no exaggeration to suggest that no other record then or since has sounded quite like the *Are You Experienced* LP. The title track is remarkably ambitious for the era, with four-track machines still being state of the art in Britain and therefore requiring creative sleight of hand to manipulate preliminary mixes and

overdubs between multiple machines to achieve the desired results. With parts of the title track involving backwards drums, bass, and guitar created by inverting multitrack tape and recording the output on to another four-track unit, all members of the Experience were challenged to rapidly adapt to the new possibilities. This also meant that from the very beginning of the group's recording existence, the Experience was creating material that could not be fully reproduced on stage by the trio. Apart from the Beatles whose live performance retirement occurred around the same time to allow for greater studio experimentation, this placed Hendrix's band outside of existing pop norms.

Sessions for the debut single "Hey Joe" began with the basic tracks being recorded on October 23, 1966, at De Lane Lea Studios (also known as Kingsway) in London, with additional work occurring later at CBS and Pye Studios. When lack of money forced Chas Chandler to find other facilities, Polydor's assistance meant that an account could be opened at the trendy Olympic Studios (also in London) where the band first encountered engineer Eddie Kramer. Consequently, much of the album's recording and mixing was completed there. According to John McDermott, mixing was finished in the early hours of Tuesday, April 25, 1967. Music press reports in March quoted producer Chas Chandler saying that an unspecified fault led to a decision "to re-record all but six of the LP tracks" resulting in the release being delayed for a month.

The explosive "Purple Haze" was written on Boxing Day (December 26) 1966 backstage at the Upper Cut Club in London. Chandler recalls that it took four hours to record the song and that "with 'Purple Haze' we began experimenting with different sounds." This may be the first Hendrix recording to utilize Roger Mayer's Octavia® device that enhanced the guitar's overall sound. In a turbulent decade permeated with friction and change, this song was one of the markers signifying a distinct point of departure from the sedate musical confines of the past. Similarly,

the urgent intensity of “Manic Depression”—one of only two songs to occupy the same sequence placement on the American and British versions of the album—delivered a focused menace and venom that sounded beyond the reach of most other acts.

The failure of “Hey Joe” to ignite the American singles chart versus its number six peak in Britain did not suggest that *Are You Experienced* would achieve any significant market impact there upon its 1967 release. Yet the LP defied such logic reaching number five in the U.S. having previously peaked at number two in Britain, sending Hendrix’s career on its way in his homeland.

The album cover:

The packaging of *Are You Experienced* has its own story with differing British and American sleeves. According to photographer Karl Ferris, Hendrix’s management hired him after seeing his work for the cover of *Evolution*, the 1967 album by the British pop group, The Hollies. Interestingly, like *Are You Experienced*, *Evolution* also had a different American cover design although Ferris’s band photo was still used. While The Hollies were far from being a psychedelic pop archetype, the visual feel of *Evolution* still communicated the hippie-centered cultural flavor of the time. On showing a portfolio of his work to Hendrix in London in 1967, Ferris recalls the guitarist’s excitement with the photos and his observation that Ferris’s visual art mirrored what Hendrix was attempting to achieve with music. To capture the long-haired look of the era, Hendrix had his hair straightened for the photo shoot in Kew Gardens taken with infrared film. Ferris’s photo of the Experience was used on the American release which later became the standard face of *Are You Experienced*. It replaced the original British cover that featured Hendrix in a cape draped above his two fellow band members. In that photo taken by Bruce Fleming, Hendrix allegedly said it “made him look like a fairy,” so he probably preferred the Ferris

shot on the American cover. Ferris also took the photo used on the back cover of the 1968 *Electric Ladyland* package. With later reissues (except for the 1993 Polydor version) the American cover (with art direction credited to Ed Thrasher, though Karl Ferris was really responsible for the design) was used. The British cover design has largely been relegated to a supplementary graphic role instead.

A May 1967 *Melody Maker* review referred to Hendrix’s “refusal to be blatantly ‘commercial’” and asserted that the album “may sound very weird and freaky to some. ...” That sense of innovation and originality that could have been a commercial liability actually became one of the debut album’s greatest long-term assets. In totality, *Are You Experienced* captured both the realist angst and utopian optimism of the time while also opening portals into rock’s future. In 2005, the album was added to America’s Library of Congress National Recording Registry as a historically significant audio artifact recognized for its artistic and cultural impact.

## Arnold, P.P.

### b. October 3, 1946

Although this American soul singer (born Patricia Ann Cole in Los Angeles) was never a member of Jimi Hendrix’s bands, Arnold’s presence in London at the time of his rapid ascent meant that she witnessed his historic impact first-hand.

She had two children by the age of 17 and was trapped in an abusive marriage before embarking on her professional music journey. Arnold arrived in London in 1966 as a backing vocalist for Ike and Tina Turner (in The Ikettes from 1964), who were then promoting the sonically epic Phil Spector-produced single “River Deep, Mountain High” in Britain after the record had spectacularly flopped in America. (It eventually peaked at number 3 in Britain.) Ike and Tina Turner toured the U.K. as the opening act for the

Rolling Stones whose singer Mick Jagger soon persuaded Arnold to leave the duo and start a solo career. Arnold then signed to Immediate Records run by the Stones' manager, Andrew Loog Oldham. He was one of the record executives that rejected the opportunity to sign Jimi Hendrix in New York in 1966 following the efforts of British model Linda Keith to bring the then-unknown guitarist into the spotlight. In further curious intersections, Hendrix had briefly played as a back-up musician for Ike and Tina Turner, while Arnold was reportedly christened "PP" by Gered Mankowitz, one of the first photographers to capture promotional shots of Hendrix and the Experience shortly after the group's formation. Mankowitz also took the cover photo for Arnold's second solo album.

In an interview, she recalled first meeting Jimi Hendrix at the Bag O'Nails Club in London, allowing the guitarist to jam during the end of her second set at the venue. Instantly striking up a connection, she later attended several of Hendrix's London gigs. She notes that "London was extremely important to the both of us. There is no way that either of us would've been able to project in a cross-over environment like we did in London as a result of the racist attitudes in America." Arnold stated in a 2016 interview with Britain's *Daily Express* newspaper that Jimi Hendrix was her "soul brother" and that they were also lovers.

Seven months after arriving in London, she reached number 18 on the British charts in May 1967 with her second single, the Cat Stevens composition "The First Cut is the Deepest," with three more less successful hits following that year before the 1968 release of two non-charting LPs, *The First Lady of Immediate* and *Kafunta*. Arnold also sang on "Tin Soldier," the late 1967 hit for label mates the Small Faces featuring singer and guitarist Steve Marriott (later of Humble Pie) with whom she was also romantically involved. Another collaboration included a 1968 recording with a young Rod Stewart, "Come Home Baby," produced by Mick Jagger, reissued as a vinyl

single in 2005. She recorded two unsuccessful singles in 1969, with a pair of similar failures in 1970 as her career stalled.

A temporary return to Los Angeles did not revive her eclectic solo career which had been born and bred in Britain. Arnold later sang on the second album by British singer/songwriter Nick Drake (d. 1974), *Bryter Layter* (1970), which later assumed cult significance following Drake's tragic drug overdose death. Tragedy directly touched her own life when her daughter was killed in a car accident in 1977, leading to a temporary retreat from the public sphere.

After resettling in the U.K., subsequent work in stage musicals was followed by intermittent recordings culminating in her last British hit single in 1988, "Burn It Up" (credited to Beatmasters with PP Arnold), which reached number 14. Arnold's other numerous recorded collaborations included work with the British dance music production duo The KLF and Ocean Colour Scene, both in the 1990s. She also toured as a backing vocalist with ex-Pink Floyd member Roger Waters between 1999 and 2008, while also appearing on his 1992 album *Amused to Death*. Arnold sang backing vocals on Peter Gabriel's 1986 American number one single "Sledgehammer" and its top ten follow-up, "Big Time." Working with Gabriel on the biggest selling album of his career provided further evidence of her enduring talent for enhancing the work of other artists.

Despite not having an album of her own music issued since 1968, Arnold resurfaced in 2017 to promote the long-delayed release of *The Turning Tide*, a record made between 1969 and 1970 that perished in the vaults after the collapse of the Immediate label. Co-produced by Bee Gees singer/songwriter Barry Gibb and superstar Cream guitarist Eric Clapton, initial plans for the record's release fell apart. Robert Stigwood (d. 2016), who managed both Gibb and Clapton at the time, insisted that Gibb focus on his own group, which had temporarily split following internal disagreements. Arnold enigmatically attributes the album's prolonged hibernation to "politics."

The eventual release of *The Turning Tide* was followed on August 9, 2019 by the appropriately titled album, *The New Adventures Of ... P.P. Arnold* showcasing new material advertised as her first collection of songs in 51 years at age 72. She now lives in southern Spain.

## **Auger, Brian.**

**b. July 18, 1939**

Born in London, England, Auger is a dynamic jazz-influenced keyboardist best known for his Hammond organ playing. One of Auger's first high-profile roles was performing in the band Steampacket formed in 1964 or 1965 (depending on the source) with later star Rod Stewart as one of its lead singers.

Auger's group is considered the first to host a British performance by Jimi Hendrix after the guitarist's arrival from America in September 1966. The Brian Auger Trinity was formed around 1966, though the band's first album, *Open*, was released in 1967. Hendrix's manager/producer Chas Chandler proposed having the American guitarist join the Brian Auger Trinity at the likely expense of the band's existing axeman, Vic Briggs, an idea which Auger promptly rejected. Despite having no knowledge of Hendrix's abilities, he did agree to allow the newcomer to sit in with the Trinity at the Blaises club in London. This was also apparently Hendrix's first performance experience with the Marshall amplifiers that would soon become a trademark of his guitar sound.

Popular French singer Johnny Hallyday attended this gig and was impressed enough with Hendrix to offer him (through Chandler) an opening slot on Hallyday's upcoming tour of France. Brian Auger also performed on some of those package tour dates. By 1968, when Hendrix had established a reputation with the Experience's first two albums, Auger's single "This Wheel's On Fire" (a Bob Dylan cover) was a major international hit reaching number five in Britain, though

it made little impact in America peaking at an unspectacular number 106. The song was credited in the U.K. to (lead singer) Julie Driscoll, Brian Auger & the Trinity. In the U.S., the unit was simply known as the Brian Auger Trinity. After unsuccessful follow-up attempts and internal friction, Auger disbanded the group in July 1970. His new outfit, Oblivion Express, first reached the American albums chart in 1971 with its eponymously titled debut. Auger charted thirteen albums in America (three with the Trinity, and ten with Oblivion Express) between 1969 and 1977.

In 2010, Auger was interviewed following a performance in Mannheim, Germany (at the Pop Akademie), and this inevitably encompassed his recollections of Hendrix. Auger spoke about what appeared to be the last occasions when he saw the guitarist. They ran into each other at an early 1970 New York recording studio session being produced by Alan Douglas. Auger's main observation during his conversation with Hendrix outside of the studio was that the guitarist's "skin was grey and ... he looked so ill." Jimi Hendrix asked Auger to play on his next album (which ultimately became the first official posthumous release *The Cry of Love*), but his prior live commitments ruled out any such possibility. However, Auger was invited to visit Hendrix's Electric Lady recording studio the next morning to audition some of the work-in-progress. During this encounter, Auger recalled, "at one point he pulled out some silver paper and ... he started to sniff this stuff. ... It was obviously, like, heroin." In response to Auger's warning that Hendrix was endangering his own life by consuming the drugs, the guitarist "said something to me that I'll never forget: 'You know what Brian? I need a lot more people around me like you.'" Auger estimates that it was four to five months later when he learned of Hendrix's death in London: "Very sad, because he was such an incredible talent, and I thought, wow, I'll never get the opportunity to do something with him now."

Audiences will never know how well such an alliance might have worked, although the chemistry between Hendrix and former Traffic keyboardist

Steve Winwood on *Electric Ladyland*'s "Voodoo Chile" in 1968 suggests that highly positive potential for such an organ and guitar interaction. The fact that both Hendrix and Auger could visualize the possibility says a great deal about their mutual respect and admiration. Auger's groups were never as guitar-intensive as either the Jimi Hendrix Experience or the Band of Gypsys, but his fluidly lyrical organ playing certainly mirrored aspects of Hendrix's expressive fire. Although the two never recorded together, Hendrix could hardly have had a more appropriate starting point for his British solo career odyssey than a guest slot with the incendiary Auger.

### ***Axis: Bold as Love* (1967)**



FIGURE A.2 The Experience appearing on Dutch TV in March 1967.

#### TRACK LIST:

EXP / Up From The Skies / Spanish Castle Magic / Wait Until Tomorrow / Ain't No Telling / Little Wing / If 6 Was 9 / You Got Me Floatin' / Castles Made of Sand / She's So Fine / One Rainy Wish / Little Miss Lover / Bold As Love

The Experience's confidence had been bolstered by the release of their critically acclaimed and commercially successful debut LP. After being released in Britain by Track Records on December

1, 1967, the band's second album, *Axis: Bold As Love*, reached number five when it entered the charts a mere seven months after *Are You Experienced* had debuted. Recorded between May 4 and October 30, 1967 at Olympic Studios in London, *Axis* was released in America on January 10, 1968, eventually peaking at number three in February and joining *Are You Experienced* in the Top Ten. Reprise Records apparently delayed the record's American release to avoid market conflict with the Ed Chalpin-produced album, *Get That Feeling*, which included Hendrix backing the vocalist Curtis Knight. *Get That Feeling* was rushed on to the market by Capitol Records® in December 1967 and hyped as the next Jimi Hendrix album. Due to its opportunistic release and misleading advertising, the substandard *Feeling* was initially mistaken by many Hendrix fans as the legitimate follow-up to *Are You Experienced*. This misperception was only effectively corrected when *Axis* was released, and the scope of the record's creative achievement is all the more impressive when one considers the many live gigs constantly undertaken by the group during the recording process.

By the time *Axis* was released in America, Reprise had fully recognized the Experience's commercial value and committed to an extensive campaign. The label's February 1968 full-page ad in *Billboard* announcing the album's presence to the music trade referred to "a typically thunderous Reprise promotion" including "huge outdoor painted billboards!" The ad also exclaimed that Reprise had "every aspect of consumer awareness conscientiously exploited!" Apart from signaling the existence of essential label support for the album, the statements also underlined the rapid commodification of an ongoing musical revolution; mainstream corporations were determined not to be financially left behind by the very counterculture that theoretically opposed them.

Many fans consider *Axis* to be Hendrix's quintessential statement, and he was certainly aware of a musical progression that had taken place even since the recent release of the band's debut. Hendrix said, "You can hear the changes from *Are*

*You Experienced*, loud and brash and frustrated, rebellious and so forth ... and then trying to maybe with *Axis* ... cool everything down a little bit and like, bring some beautiful stories together and maybe save certain things here and there, you know.” However, the guitarist lamented that the group had a mere sixteen days to make the album when the industry standard, in his view, was a three or four month process. His apparent dissatisfaction with the hastily produced album perhaps heightened the intensity of his creative perfectionism, which in the following year stretched the recording of the *Electric Ladyland* album into a lengthy, expensive, and sometimes tedious process.

Nonetheless, while allowing Hendrix to exercise his artistic imagination, the album also yielded classics including “Little Wing,” “Spanish Castle Magic,” and “Castles Made of Sand,” all of which have been extensively covered by ambitious devotees of the guitarist’s innovation. Engineer Eddie Kramer remarked that he didn’t know about any of the musical plans until the guitarist was actually in the studio, but he suggested that Hendrix did have concepts worked out. Such was the degree of Hendrix’s creative involvement in production matters that Kramer views *Axis* as the true beginning of the Experience. Other engineers also assisted on the album; Terry Brown worked on “EXP” during Kramer’s temporary absence, while George Chkiantz was consistently involved as second engineer.

Collaborating guitarist Dave Mason of Traffic spoke of Hendrix’s growing involvement in the mixing and production processes, a viewpoint echoed by Mitch Mitchell, who added that this may have nurtured seeds of later discord with producer Chas Chandler. In his liner notes for the 2010 reissue, writer Jym Fahey comments that “By the *Axis* sessions, he and Jimi were equal partners in creative matters.” In an interview just prior to the release of *Axis*, Hendrix confirmed that “We all helped in producing it with Chas and I mixed it with him as well ...” and hinted at the spatial sonic detail in emphasizing that the

record was “made with stereo in mind. ...” The new commercial supremacy of the LP in 1967 was underlined by the complete absence of hit singles from *Axis* while the album thrived on the charts. Oddly, the sci-fi laden “Up From The Skies” and “One Rainy Wish” were issued on the lead single (peaking at number 82 in America), even though far more radio-friendly options were available on the record. *Axis* actually yielded no singles at all in the U.K., and when the 1968 *Smash Hits* compilation was released it did not include any tracks from *Axis*, thereby leaving (intentionally or otherwise) the LP as the only way to hear those songs.

The apparent sonic expanse of the album’s stereo version (at a time when mono versions were still being released) obscures the fact that it was recorded using four-track equipment. Almost unthinkable by twenty-first century technological standards, the recording limitations affecting *Axis* (like *Are You Experienced* before it), demanded spontaneous ingenuity that would be difficult to repeat. Hendrix allegedly lost a master tape of part of the album (left in a taxi, according to some accounts), which meant the mix had to be roughly reproduced overnight in order to meet the looming submission and manufacturing deadlines. Due to multiple conflicting versions of events, it remains unclear which portion of the record was lost. In a 2018 article, the British Hendrix fanzine *Jimpress*<sup>®</sup> even theorizes that the ‘lost tape’ fiasco might have simply been an orchestrated ruse by Chandler and/or Hendrix to gain additional mixing time, and that no part of the mixed recordings had been misplaced. Chas Chandler was quoted as saying “we went back in the studio the next night and mixed the whole album again in four and a half hours.”

One casualty of the mix recovery process was “If 6 Was 9.” The ideal mix could not be replicated and Noel Redding’s rough mix copy on a wrinkled three-inch tape reel had to be retrieved by taxi and transferred to another machine for inclusion on the album. “If 6 Was 9” included foot-stomping overdubs from Graham Nash (of The Hollies, then later Crosby, Stills & Nash) and Gary Leeds (the Walker Brothers drummer). Nash also provided

background vocals on “You Got Me Floatin’” with Roy Wood and Trevor Burton from British pop band The Move, who often toured on the same bill with Hendrix.

Songs such as “Bold As Love” have become inextricably associated with the 1967 peak of psychedelic pop music, bringing the audio technique of phasing (or phase cancellation) to the masses. In non-technical terms, phasing creates a sweeping, swirling ethereal effect that might reasonably be described as an aural whirlwind. Its experimental use further separated the sound of the late sixties from almost all recorded work that had preceded that era. One of the earliest well-known examples was The Small Faces 1967 transatlantic hit single “Itchycoo Park” on which Eddie Kramer and assistant engineer George Chkiantz had worked. Hendrix’s metaphoric and even mystical color references in the lyrics also capture the sense of utopian artistic adventure that began accompanying the emergence of the LP as the recording industry’s best-selling format.

The opening track “EXP” is a brief and intense sonic collage, perhaps designed to disrupt any expectations of an overtly commercial record, while also setting the scene for the listener’s cosmic adventure. “Spanish Castle Magic” exemplifies the Experience’s best rock energy, unleashing the trio’s kinetic power in a three-minute burst (aided by multitracked guitar, an eight-string bass, and piano overdubs). Lyrically, the song refers to one of Seattle’s popular dance halls, the Spanish Castle, viewed as the performing apex for any area musician. Hendrix played the venue with his early group the Rocking Kings, and even frequently visited in the hope of sitting in with other acts. There remains some uncertainty about whether Hendrix or Redding played the bass on the finished master tape, though recording engineer Eddie Kramer recalls Hendrix performing the bass part with the fuzz-inducing Octavia effects device applied to the instrument.

The reflective “Little Wing” may have been a tribute to Hendrix’s late mother, given the stratospheric, heavenly focus of its lyrics. The song

occupies a very different part of Hendrix’s musical spectrum, emphasizing his dreamy melodicism and the band’s musical versatility. A heavy-handed rock treatment might have destroyed such a song, overwhelming its intrinsic beauty. The band’s early takes were certainly much more aggressive and muscular than the final result, with producer Chas Chandler deciding that a more restrained approach was required. The track ultimately included Hendrix on glockenspiel, an instrument light years from the guitar-centered mythmaking already inextricably linked with him. Fortunately, later covers of the song, including a well-known reinterpretation by Eric Clapton, have preserved its delicacy while also infusing it with more of rock’s anthemic character.

“Castles Made of Sand” restates Hendrix’s autobiographical introspection and the haunting influence of his fractured family life on his psyche. Brother Leon Hendrix has no doubt that their parents’ volatile marriage and the death of their mother, Lucille, are at the song’s lyrical center. The actual and metaphoric vulnerability of sand castles effectively communicates the transience of relationships and life itself in a narrative of philosophical resignation.

In a 1968 *Rolling Stone* magazine review almost as psychedelic as the *Axis* LP itself, the author praised the album although he found it “Uneven in quality. . . .” Part of that unevenness came from the inclusion of oddities such as Noel Redding’s exceptionally pop-flavored composition “She’s So Fine.” *Axis: Bold As Love* nonetheless emphatically confirmed that the Experience was a force to be taken seriously in the long-term and that Hendrix was no ephemeral pop star. Some material from the sessions did not result in finished masters; one such item is “Mr. Bad Luck,” which showed up on 2010’s *Valleys of Neptune* album.

The album cover:

As noted in the exhaustive account of Jimi Hendrix’s life, *Electric Gypsy*, the American and British cover art for *Axis* was the same whereas *Are*

*You Experienced* had distinctly different covers in the two countries. The artwork involved multiple participants: Viraat Purushan-Vishnuroopam's image of the Hindu god Vishnu provided the foundation, but British designers David King (d. 2016) and Roger Law superimposed figures of Hendrix and his fellow Experience group members in place of the revered religious icon. Their design was based on a photo taken by Karl Ferris, whose work was featured on the American cover of *Are You Experienced*.

While the cover's use of Eastern religious iconography pointed towards the search for cosmic solutions in the midst of social chaos, it created its own worldly disruption. Its application of religious imagery became highly controversial when in June 2014 the Malaysian government banned importation and sale of the album with its original cover because of its heretical depiction of the band members. There's no indication, however, as to why it appears to have taken almost fifty years for the potential offense to be officially recognized and acted upon by the Malaysian authorities. In 2010, Converse All-Star Shoes bearing portions of the album cover art were withdrawn from sale in America following complaints from the Hindu community. It was noted that apart from the

portrayals of the Experience group members, the imagery of Hindu deities on footwear was deemed offensive. It's unlikely that such long-term consequences were imagined in 1967 when the cover was created.

Publicist Keith Altham estimated that £3,000 of the album's £10,000 budget was spent on the album sleeve, although King denies that he and Law ever earned such an amount from creating the artwork, maintaining instead that they split a mere £100. Sadly, the tight manufacturing schedule meant that the Experience members were not involved in the cover art decision-making process, as Hendrix himself acknowledged. Responding to the pseudo-mystical imagery, the guitarist said, "When I first saw that design I thought, 'It's great, they have an Indian painting about us, but maybe we should have an American Indian.'"

### Figure Credits

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