

The Jimi Hendrix Experience
Axis: Bold As Love (Reprise)

203 days after the U.K. release of *Are You Experienced*, The Jimi Hendrix Experience continues their tour through the cosmos with their 1968 sophomore album *Axis: Bold as Love*. Recorded while on tour in 1967, the trio's follow up to their stardom-launching debut is noticeably thinner. Clocking in at under 40 minutes, eight out of the 13 tracks last less than three minutes, building anticipation for the standouts ("Spanish Castle Magic") ("If 6 Was 9"). Yet the marriage between Mitchell's jazz grooves ("Up From The Skies"), Redding's reliable bass licks ("Wait Until Tomorrow") and the American's bluesy riffs ("Little Wing") snowballs into a grand psychedelic finale ("Bold as Love"). The former Little Richard backup's electrifying solos take a backseat to let his lyrical prowess shine ("Castles Made of Sand"). Nihilistic attitudes dominate and offer insight into the ex-paratrooper's growing frustration and dwindling confidence in society amidst the Vietnam War ("If 6 Was 9"). The former guitarist turned bassist takes the lead in "She's so Fine," a composition displaying the stylistic canyon between the two singers. This LP is a "bold" declaration of the band's mastery and solidifies their influential standing in the upcoming evolution of rock.

4 out of 5 stars – Christina Lopez