

The Jimi Hendrix Experience
***Electric Ladyland* (Reprise)**
By John Melendez

Electric Ladyland, the third and final studio album by UK trio The Jimi Hendrix Experience, is not a journey, but an arrival. The destination, a sprawling electric-blues enclave carved out by sinistral Stratocaster Seattleite Jimi Hendrix. His English rhythm reinforcements, bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell, return to pave the sonic roads with compelling, groovy brickwork.

The group has recruited a galvanic musical ensemble to traverse the expansive and multi-layered 74-minute 1968 double-LP. New additions like the organ, piano and saxophone inhabit the dramatic musical recesses found across the spacious hard-rock heartland. Truly, *Electric Ladyland* is the fierce, full-bodied psych-blues zenith that the previous two albums were always en voyage to.

Upon first entering the bluesy loveland via a tender-hearted magic carpet ride ("Have You Ever Been (To Electric Ladyland)"), the first major stop of the four-part tour acts as a 15-minute, unfurling right of entry. The supreme, grooved-out jam track "Voodoo Chile" serves doubly as an origin story and an exhibition of the heightened genre command that Hendrix has ripened into.

Tracks like Redding's plucky, redemptive solo outing "Little Miss Strange," tootley earworm "Crosstown Traffic" and howling strut "Gypsy Eyes" help allay the disheartening, pop concessions of the prior album. Even the less decided cuts like "Come On (Let the Good Times Roll)" and the inflated 14-minute underwater escapism "1983... (A Merman I Should Turn to Be)" demonstrate a refined level of intention.

The album's timeless twilight closers, electrifying blues-rock epitome and Bob Dylan cover, "All Along the Watchtower" and scorching finale "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)" are resounding testaments to the mystical, self-assured alchemy at Hendrix's fingertips. "If I don't meet you no more in this world," he says behind a dense fog of warped, ineffable shred. "I'll meet you in the next one. And don't be late."