

The Jimi Hendrix Experience
Are You Experienced (1967) (Reprise)
by John Melendez

The debut album by UK trio, The Jimi Hendrix Experience, poses an important question. And by the end of the 40-minute LP, seattle-born guitarist, singer, songwriter Jimi Hendrix, bassist Noel Redding and drummer Mitch Mitchell, through their compelling chemistry and alluring, otherworldly aura, are intent on leaving you in an altered state. In 11 tracks, the trio, led by Hendrix's impassioned vocals and impulsive guitar, shepherds the listener through a swirling, transcendental spectrum of human emotion.

Potent intro "Purple Haze," where Hendrix questions existence for the first of many times, sets the tone. "Am I happy or in misery," he asks God or the Universe. Then, the highs and lows permeate throughout: from fiery dejection ("I Don't Live Today") to jazz-fueled, rock exploration ("Third Stone from the Sun"). All of it, spattered with a few drops from a hallucinogenic love potion; side-effects may include lustful charisma and bluesy, metaphysical angst.