

**The Jimi Hendrix Experience**  
***Axis: Bold As Love* (Reprise)**  
**By John Melendez**

If the debut album by UK trio The Jimi Hendrix Experience was a full-hearted, psychedelic voyage through the inner self, then their sophomore album *Axis: Bold As Love* is the reflective, heavy-eyed comedown. Spirited Seattleite vocalist and southpaw strummer Jimi Hendrix, propulsive bassist Noel Redding and forcible drummer Mitch Mitchell follow up their highly successful rock-and-roll foray only seven months after its kaleidoscopic emergence.

Ensuing is an album mostly devoid of its predecessor's hard-hitting, jazz-rock experimentation. Instead, the 39-minute 1968 LP is a diluted, pop-acclimated take on prior themes like love and desire ("Wait Until Tomorrow," "You Got Me Floatin'," ) without the sultry magnetism Hendrix previously conveyed. Concussive intro skit "EXP" and Redding's pale spotlight moment "She's So Fine," dampen the release's impact.

Still, the succeeding offering deepens the lucid songwriting and emotional resonance that was formerly established. The trio's gripping, blues-imbued chemistry and Hendrix's powerful vocal delivery remain intact. The actual opener "Up From The Skies" provides an inspired yet singular jazz-infused boogie.

Evocative cuts like "Castles Made of Sand" help offset the otherwise formulaic atmosphere. "Little Wing," an affecting blues-soaked ode to nurturing love strikes a chord despite its brief run-time and lyrical content. Its riveting tonal cousin, "One Rainy Wish" and smoldering closer "Bold As Love" underpin the idea that Hendrix still has a stirring, earnest sonic vision to build upon.