Jimi Hendrix And Why He Is Imp Essay, Research Paper

Jimi Hendrix and Why He Is Important

Jimi Hendrix became popular for the person that he was rather than the songs that he wrote. Purple Haze was known as his signature song primarily because it was his first really big hit that was his own music. He crossed many boundaries and influenced many musicians to come. Hendrix excelled in unique guitar sounds, and Purple Haze is a fine showing of Hendrix s combination of sounds and innovative lyrics. He changed rock and roll by making his music show what the musician was thinking instead of just giving the listener what they wanted to hear. He gave musicians motivation for musical expression he didn’t just show talent when he played he showed feeling and emotion. These are just a few of the reasons why Hendrix s music was included in the NPR s top 100.

Hendrix was born November 27, 1942 in Seattle, Washington. The father of this young rock star bought him his first guitar at age eleven. It wasn’t anything spectacular; it was actually an old right-handed acoustic. Even though Hendrix was left-handed it still didn’t stop him. He strung the guitar up backwards, so he could play lefty, and started to teach himself how to play. Learning to play by yourself isn’t exactly easy, but Hendrix had a lot of patience and determination to keep up with his playing. At the time Hendrix listened to blues musicians like Robert Johnson and B. B. King. This influenced Hendrix s blues riffs in his music later in life. As a teenager Hendrix played in a few different rock bands in Seattle. The young musician discovered what he loved to do at an early age. Fans question why Jimi Hendrix looked elsewhere before realizing that rock and roll would be his life.

Hendrix left school at age sixteen with his fathers’ permission. He decided that he would join the army as a paratrooper. While in the army Jimi met a fellow musician who kept his interest in music during the time he was away. They both taught each other different things. He listened intently still to the great musicians of the time like Muddy Waters and Lightning Hopkins. He actually began to take after some musicians of his day by impersonating them and the rituals involved with their practicing. Jimi only spent a short time in the army. While he was on his 26th jump he got hurt. The army had no choice, but to discharge him.

Once Hendrix was out of the army that s when he started to focus more on his music career. He first played as backup guitarists in a few different bands. One of these bands was the Isley Brothers. Hendrix wasn’t one to boast about himself. He was actually quite shy, but he began to realize that he wasn’t supposed to be a back up guitarist. He then made another change; he started playing in New York at a few different clubs in the area. Hendrix began to develop his style. Heads started to turn in the clubs that he played. He caught the eyes of some big musicians of the time. A man by the name of Chas Chandler talked Hendrix into going to London to play over there and start a new band.

While in London Hendrix was thrown together with Noel Redding who was a bassist and Mitch Mitchell as drummer for this trio soon to be known worldwide. The collaboration of these three musicians was indeed out of the ordinary. Redding was a guitarist, but decided to play bass for this project. Redding said that he needed some money and he hoped that this job would pay off. Mitchell was a jazz drummer, but oddly enough got selected for the job. Jazz is usually played at a different tempo than rock music, however Mitchell contributed to the unique sounds of the three musicians with his style of drumming. Jimi truly unleashed his musical talent with these two musicians instead of just using the standard blues format for their songs. Hendrix thought up something else. He would create a new sound that nobody ever heard before.

On top of this new sound Hendrix had a ridiculous sense of stage presence. The engineer in the recording of Purple Haze was a man by the name of Eddie Kramer. Kramer said that Hendrix was unbelievably shy and hated the sound of his own voice. In order to record him they had to set up screens all around him and turn the lights down so nobody could see him. If what Kramer said is true; it s hard to understand how Hendrix could be so out of control on stage. It has been known that he was a fan of drugs. Excuse me while I kiss the sky is one of Hendrix s lines in Purple Haze.

This line as well as some others in the song can be understood by some people to be a reference to drugs. Some people say that he used them before, during, and after his performances. This could indeed be the reason for his stage antics. Jimi as well as the other two members would wear outrageous clothes and puff out their hair. Hendrix was also known to make sexual gestures with his guitar and sometimes even set his guitar on fire after his set was done. Hendrix s first show with The Experience in the U.S. Hendrix torched his guitar at the Monterey Pop Festival. This began the stardom of Jimi Hendrix in the United States.

Prior to his rise to fame, well-known musicians had already predicted Jimi as being the next rock legend. While Jimi was in London, Eric Clapton and Pete Townshend saw him at a local club. The two were so impressed that they went to every show that Hendrix had in London from that time on. After a while Jimi just got too big. His time in Europe was done, he needed to go and play in the United States again.

Hendrix was now doing what he always wanted to do, playing different music, that people had never heard before and he was getting a rise out of them. The sound that Jimi got his guitar to make was unlike any other performer before his time. He adjusted his guitar to different settings and cranked his amp during performances. Having his amp so loud caused sounds to come out of it that not even Jimi could control. In Purple Haze Hendrix s sound is very distorted during the verse. It is possible to hear his licks clearly but his chords in the verse are low and distorted. Maybe Hendrix did this so you could understand his lyrics.

The fact that he didn’t seem to care was what pleased the crowd so much. He could go totally nuts on stage, make a few crazy sounds and walk off. However Hendrix wasn’t going out to impress either black or white. He just wanted to play.

“Purple Haze” was the Experience s first big hit. When Kramer recorded “Purple Haze” he did some different things with the way he recorded it. At times he would record at half speed, so when the song played normally it would be fast and have a different sound to it.

It is hard to be sure of what Jimi was singing about. It is easy to decipher the words, but you never know what could have been going on inside of Jimi’s head while he wrote the lyrics. He said that he wrote it after a dream that he had about a science fiction movie that he saw. Only we don t know if there was anything else that may have had some influence on Hendrix when he wrote it. Musicians are supposed to keep some things secret. In the first verse of Purple Haze Hendrix says, Purple Haze was in my brain, Lately things don t seem the same, actin funny but I don t know why scuse me while I kiss the sky. This verse can be mostly seen as a drug reference. Today Purple Haze is a type of marijuana. It can be seen as to why it is thought that this verse refers to marijuana, but it may also refer to LSD, which was another drug that was big at the time. Not many people will actually ever know definitely what the song is about. However music is created so people can interpret what they want from it. Not everybody will take a piece of music and feel the same way about it. Purple Haze may have touched some people and it may have turned away some. But it must have touched more than turned away, for it to be incorporated in the NPR top 100.

Jimi has influenced many musicians of today, which has already been stated throughout this paper. The Dave Matthews Band has a cover of the song All Along the Watch Tower. Their cover of it is entirely different than the original song, but it made for a good remembrance. Grunge bands of the 90 s like Nirvana had a trademark of breaking their equipment on stage and in videos. Jimi did this and The Who did this as well, yet kids believe that these new bands were the first to do it. Hendrix deserves credit in a lot of places that he is not given it, but that goes with hundreds of other musician as well.

Jimi Hendrix did a lot for rock music all over the world. He continues to be listened to and influential to musicians still today. His time on earth was relatively short, but he made his mark. It s just a shame he isn’t around to see all that he did.

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