Jimi Hendrix Essay, Research Paper

Had rock guitarist Jimi Hendrix not died of complications from a drug overdose on Sept. 18, 1970, at the age of 27 there’s no doubt he would have continued to contribute great works of art not only in the pop world but also in the jazz realm. At the time of his death, he was preparing to collaborate with Miles Davis, who was fascinated with his searing music.

Hendrix was born in Seattle on Nov. 27, 1942. A fan of Muddy Waters, Elmore James, B.B. King and Chuck Berry, Hendrix developed a guitar style steeped in the blues yet laced with a gritty electricity. In his early career, he performed with the Isley Brothers, Little Richard and King Curtis, but seared his name into rock history when he formed the Jimi Hendrix Experience with the volcanic, Philly Joe Jones-influenced Mitch Mitchell on drums and Noel Redding on bass.

Hendrix’s singular, timeless guitar style of sonic tremors, churnings, squeals, shivers and crunches made him one of the emulated guitarists of the rock era. Given his god-like stature, it’s amazing that Hendrix released only four albums during his lifetime. Are You Experienced?, released in 1967, is arguably one of the great rock recordings of all time. Hendrix’s second album, Axis: Bold As Love, showcases the guitarist exploring a broader sonic range, especially on “Up From The Skies” and “If 6 Was 9.”

Hendrix then recorded the classic double album Electric Ladyland, where he freed himself from the confines of AM pop radio’s three-minute song length and boldly jammed with jazz sensibilities on “Voodoo Chile” and “Rainy Day, Dream Away.”

The Hendrix catalog has been reissued and reconfigured numerous times since his death. A prime example of a “new” collection is the MCA disc Blues, a retrospective collection of blues-infused tunes recorded throughout his brief career. While Blues is another in a long train of posthumous Hendrix releases, it comprises largely unheard performances that point to how heavily Hendrix leaned on blues fundamentals when he was a mega rock star wowing capacity crowds with his fiery guitar assaults. Today, Hendrix’s albums continue to be best-sellers.

In 1970, Hendrix was elected by the Readers into the Down Beat Hall of Fame.