



was released to raucous reviews, and two centrally important live shows made Hendrix both an internationally famous musician and a musically revered performer.

June 1967 at the Savile Theatre in London, Hendrix marched out on stage playing the Beatles. Paul McCartney said, ‘The curtains flew back and he came walking forward playing “Sgt. Pepper”. It’s a pretty major compliment in anyone’s book. I put that down as one of the great honours of my career.’ McCartney would, that same year, recommend the Jimi Hendrix Experience to the organisers of the Monterey Pop Festival, and their success there would give Hendrix his breakthrough in the United States after much commercial success in England. At the festival, Hendrix would create one of the most iconic and memorable images in the history of rock ‘n’ roll and perhaps in music altogether: with the aid of lighter fluid, he set his guitar on fire, knelt by its burning body, and wafted the smoke upwards in a voodoo gesture of his mystic connection with the music. A *poignant* moment, unforgettable and epochal.

This, however, would not be the height of Hendrix’s career. The Experience would go on to release two more albums, *Axis: Bold as Love* and *Electric Ladyland*, both of which saw Hendrix using new and pioneering musical techniques, showing a rising confidence in his song writing, and reinstating his position as the greatest living guitarist. After the break-up of the Experience by 1969, Hendrix was the world’s highest-paid rock musician and would headline Woodstock, an historic musical moment.

Hendrix closed the three-day festival by playing at 8am on Monday morning after three sleepless nights. Hendrix took to the stage to perform an enigmatic and visionary version of ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ with profuse amounts of feedback and distortion. After finishing his encore with hit single ‘Hey Joe’, an over-exhausted Hendrix collapsed on his way off stage.

By 1970, Hendrix was disillusioned with the music industry, heavily reliant on drug-use and extremely insecure about his personal relationships. Isolated and often sleepless, Hendrix overdosed on sleeping pills and aspirated on his own vomit in September 1970. His premature death at only 27 has since added to his allure and posthumous fame. Hendrix will forever be known as one of the most eminent musicians in history, hopefully for his achievements while alive rather than his tragic death. HB