

Helen Marketti's Music Corner



By Helen R.
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An Interview with author, Harvey Kubernik

Jimi Hendrix: Voodoo Child (Sterling Publishing Co., 2021) written by brothers, Harvey and Kenneth Kubernik is a unique read as we are given an insight into Jimi Hendrix as a person rather than the rock star persona that other books usually gravitate towards. This book is a refreshing account of memories given by recording engineers, record producers, photographers, fellow musicians, friends and fans who shed new light on a young man who left the physical realm at age 27 (November 27, 1942 – September 18, 1970). We can only speculate on what other great contributions to music Jimi Hendrix would have given us; however, we can appreciate what we have been given and see an individual mature and evolve in this book while getting to know him a little better.



Deciding on a title is a critical decision for a book, the title can influence a potential reader in many ways. "I feel that the book cover alone grabs attention but any good book needs to have a driving literary narrative and bring it into the end zone. I am proud of the work my brother Kenneth and I did to bring this book together," said Harvey. "There were several titles that we tossed around. There were some initial concerns as VooDoo Child being employed as the title because it's a song title as well. Once you see the picture of Jimi on the cover, the title itself kind of erodes because you are fixated on Jimi. His image speaks for itself. We wanted to do a different Jimi Hendrix type of book. We had the luxury of having a multi-voice narrative from many individuals."

The cover photo was taken by photographer, Henry Diltz.

Images throughout the book are from personal collections as well as professional shots. Jimi seems to have everything going for him. "There are always going to be new fans and new readers who discover Jimi Hendrix and want to know more about him," said Harvey. "There are about 75 photos including images and artifacts that have never been seen before. I have organically accumulated these resources over time. People came forward and wanted to share what they had and what they remember. The writing and quotes in the book match the visuals. Naturally, people think they know a lot about Jimi Hendrix because he has been so well documented over half of a century. Once you get into the book and spend some time with it, any mind set you have about him begins to fade and you become taken in."

Harvey was there, seeing Jimi Hendrix first hand, never knowing he would one day write a book about this iconic figure. "I was 18 years old when I saw him with The Experience at the Newport Festival '69 in Northridge, California," remembers Harvey. "The moment stood still for me when he performed, Red House. It was a blues number that lasted 12 minutes. It had such a panoramic feeling. It was freedom. The entire concert was 37 minutes."

Harvey continues, "Concerts were very different in the 60s. Musicians usually played 30-to-40-minute shows and then it was basically over. Most artists were mandated to play their hits and were not encouraged to go any deeper into their music catalog. The repertoire was dictated by the radio stations who sponsored the show or concert promoters. Things were also primitive for sound systems. Who knows what Jimi could have helped create had he lived."

People dug deep into their memories, storage and archives to participate in this book. The following is an excerpt from the book, given by Carmine Appice, drummer for Vanilla Fudge. "On that '68 West Coast Tour the Vanilla Fudge did with the Jimi Hendrix Experience, I remember playing in San Diego

at Balboa Stadium on September 3, 1968 and we played to maybe a third of capacity, 7,000 to 9,000 people in a racetrack-type setting and Jimi started doing "Voodoo Child". It was echoing through all the empty seats as we were walking back to the dressing room after seeing him onstage and to hear that wah-wah pedal traveling across those empty seats – it was fantastic. That was one of my vivid memories." You can feel this experience, it gives one chills as you feel you are there absorbing the atmosphere as well.

Jimi Hendrix has been gone for over fifty years, what is it about him that still draws fans, why does he still appeal to people? "We do live in a celebrity obsessed world," said Harvey. "Jimi is always going to be the ambassador for the Fender Guitar. He had style; his wardrobe was well put together. He was photogenic and a cooperative subject when doing interviews. He appealed to all audiences, white and black. The Experience itself was integrated as a trio. Noel Redding and Mitch Mitchell were white. I think Mitch and Jimi had a telepathic relationship. His exposure was in rock magazines and FM underground radio. Your first exposure is what usually will be the demographic of your audience. His impact on fans, record collectors and other musicians just keeps on going. He was exploited greatly and walked a lot of miles for a lot of people. His influence resides in many musicians today. His music is still here. It shows up in commercials and sound tracks for TV and movies. You can't escape him. I feel this book reminds the world of what Jimi Hendrix was about. I'm still a fan and that's the key for everything."

For more information about Harvey Kubernik's other books and updates:

www.otherworldcottageindustries.com

Jimi Hendrix: Voodoo Child is available through Amazon.com and other book outlets.

www.helenrosemchetti.com

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