

WHAT GOES ON!

THE HOT NEWS AND BIZARRE STORIES FROM THE MUSIC WORLD



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When Joni Met Jimi

Found in a tape hoarder's secret stash! The reel Hendrix recorded of Mitchell in Ottawa in 1968. But how did it happen?

IT'S ONE OF rock's most mysterious Lost Tapes legends: what happened to the recordings made of Joni Mitchell by Jimi Hendrix at Le Hibou Coffee House in Ottawa, Canada on March 19, 1968? It's a tantalising tale of two rising geni

floor in her room and listening to a tape of Hendrix's show, only for the hotel detective to repeatedly break up their party. "They didn't like the idea of three hippies sitting around, especially one black, alone in the room in this conservative hotel," she said.

music spectrum and the music they bonded over. Except the tantalising is over. After 53 years, the recordings have been recovered and will be released on volume two of Joni Mitchell's Archives series on October 29.

Hendrix scribbled his groovy impressions of the evening in his diary: "Went down to little club to see Joni, fantastic girl with heaven words. We all got to party... listen to tape and smoked up at hotel." And then, from March 20: "We left Ottawa City today. I kissed Joni goodbye..." As Mitch Mitchell recalled in his memoir *Jimi Hendrix: Inside The Experience*, the tape recorder and tapes were stolen the next day – "end of story on that".

"It's very exciting," says Ottawa native and Canadian music business lifer Ian McLeish, who found the tape in the collection of his friend Richard Patterson. Another Ottawa scene fixture, Patterson had been the drummer in local band The Esquires, and had gone on to manage artists and to work in radio for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. "So, he had a lot of contacts," says McLeish. "But, he was also a magpie, obsessed with recording tape."

McLeish has no idea how Patterson obtained the tape. In his latter years his friend suffered from dementia, and always kept his collection close. "He was a character," says McLeish. "It doesn't surprise me that somebody might have passed the tape on to him and said, 'Hang onto this.' Or, it could have come into his possession after, as he went through other people's tape libraries."

In 2002, McLeish was asked to help digitise Patterson's collection, items of which were released via his Mousehole Music setup. "After Richard died in 2010, his estate asked me to go through the tapes a second time," he continues. "I found another hundred or so. There was one that said right on it: 'Joni Mitchell Recorded Live At Le Hibou Mar/68'." The fact that Hendrix – in Ottawa to play the Capitol Theatre – taped Mitchell that night is a matter of record. Eyewitnesses recall him sitting at the front of the stage and setting up his portable machine. In David Yaffe's *Joni* biog, *Reckless Daughter*, Mitchell recalled his approach: "My name is Jimi Hendrix and I was just signed to Reprise, the same label that you're on. Could I tape your show?" According to Mitchell, Hendrix spent the show watching his levels: "He engineered it all the way through. Once in a while, he'd glance up and smile and go back to this thing."

What is certain from the recordings – now buffed by mastering maestro Bernie Grundman – is that Mitchell was on form that night, in terms of music and banter, and Hendrix no slouch as an engineer. Mitchell's *Song To A Seagull* debut would be released in days but she was already playing songs from 1969's *Clouds* and 1970's *Ladies Of The Canyon* – and one, *The Way It Is*, destined not to appear officially until now. Three Hendrix tape tracks – *Chelsea Morning*, *Roses Blue* and *Both Sides, Now* – don't make it to the box.

Post-show, Jimi, Joni and Experience drummer Mitch Mitchell repaired to the Motel de Ville in Vanier. Joni recalled them sitting on the

Beyond Rhino's release, the feedback McLeish has had from the Mitchell camp has been gratifying.

"I sent the tape to Joni's manager in April, who sent it to her," he says, "and she absolutely fell over. She couldn't believe it. She loves it. She's so glad that it was found."

"Joni absolutely fell over. She couldn't believe it."
IAN MCLEISH

Danny Eccleston

Joni Mitchell's Archives Volume 2 – The Reprise Years 1968-1971 is released by Rhino on October 29.

Taking the town by surprise: (clockwise from left) Hendrix and his Concord reel-to-reel recorder in 1967; Joni on-stage in '68; archivist and Esquires drummer Richard Patterson and his mythical Ampex tape.

Photos: TopFoto, Getty, courtesy Ian McLeish