

# GLORIOUS NOISE

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO RECREATING JIMI HENDRIX'S MIND-BLOWING WOODSTOCK RENDITION OF THE "STAR SPANGLED BANNER." by Andy Aledort



**J**IMI HENDRIX'S PERFORMANCE of the "Star Spangled Banner" at the conclusion of the Woodstock Music and Arts Festival on August 18, 1969, is one of the great electric guitar moments in the history of rock. His remarkable artistic vision enabled him to create a musical and political statement that crystallized the tumultuous Sixties youth counterculture movement into one daring, iconoclastic masterpiece of personal expression—and in under four minutes.

Today, hundreds of different guitars, amplifiers and effects pedal are readily available to any guitarist who has a decent credit limit. Back in Hendrix's heyday, however, the choice of equipment was far narrower. It's further testament to Hendrix's genius that the resourceful guitarist painted the musical equivalent of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel using a few pieces of off-the-rack gear.

For amplification, Hendrix generally used stock Marshall 100-watt Super Lead amplifiers, Model 1959, often referred to as a "Plexi" Marshall for its Plexiglas control panel. At Woodstock, Hendrix used two 100-watt tops with four 4x12 Marshall speaker cabinets, models 1960A (slant) and 1960B (straight). Each 100-watt head powered two 4x12 cabinets. Marshall 4x12 speaker cabinets from this era are often referred to as "basketweave" cabinets because of the heavy style of grille cloth they featured. Each housed four 25-watt Celestion "Greenback" speakers.

Hendrix's guitar at Woodstock was a stock white 1968 Fender Stratocaster with a maple fretboard. For the "Star Spangled Banner," Jimi set the toggle switch to the bridge pickup. He often purchased Fender Rock 'n' Roll light-gauge strings (.010, .013, .015, .026, .032, .038), but he also stated that he would



**BARS 28-30:** Hendrix begins this segment (at 1:25) with an F# chord voicing in the second position that he pulls off to the open strings. He follows this with a high Fm voicing, played by barring across the top three strings at the 13th fret, which he tremolo strums quickly. Bits of random feedback are followed by a middle-finger slide up the bottom two strings to the 14th fret, at which point Hendrix bends the two strings up one half step while simultaneously depressing the whammy bar. At 1:34, Jimi briefly returns to the song's melody.

**BARS 31-33:** At 1:38, Hendrix cleverly

## BY THIS POINT IN HENDRIX'S CAREER, HE HAD ALREADY BEEN CRAFTING ABSTRACT EXPLOSIONS OF SOUND LIKE THESE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS.

emulates the sound of a "British ambulance" by alternately hammering on to Bb (fourth string, eighth fret) and E (fifth string, seventh fret) in a steady rhythm. (These two notes form what's known as a tritone interval, so called because they are three whole steps apart.) He follows this with a middle-finger

barre across the D, G and B strings at the eighth fret, sounding an Eb triad, which he then alternates with open strings, via pull-offs and hammer-ons. Hendrix then allows the open D and G strings to ring as he proceeds to repeatedly depress and release the whammy bar in varying increments.

### bars 31-33 (1:38-1:47)

Free time

31

32

33

w/bar -2 1/2 -3 -3 -5 -3 -3 -2 1/2 -3 -11/2 -3 -11/2 w/bar -2 1/2 -2 1/2 -2 1/2 -2 1/2 -1 w/bar -2 -1

### bars 34-47 (1:48)

34

35

36

37

w/bar -1 -1 1/2

(speed up)

wide vib. w/bar

w/bar -2 (slack) fdbk. -1/2 -1 w/bar 1 1/2 w/bar

w/bar -2 1/2

\*Uni-vibe creates impression of re-attack.



**BARS 34-47:** In bar 34 (1:48), Hendrix plays another "British ambulance" lick, here on the B and G strings at the 13th and 12th frets, and slowly depresses the whammy bar, creating a sound akin to the Doppler effect. Then, in bar 35, he quickly hammers on and pulls off between the 13th fret on the G string and the open G note while violently shaking the whammy bar. Random open strings ring as Hendrix manipulates the whammy bar, recreating the Doppler-effect sounds of fighter jets and the whistles of falling bombs. Hammer-ons and pull-offs between the 16th fret and the open bass strings in bar 37 are followed in bar 38 by random high-pitched bends on the top two strings and groups of open strings that are treated with whammy-bar manipulations. Hendrix momentarily comes back down to Earth in bars 40-43 (2:20) with a statement of the final phrase of the song's second theme. He follows this in bars 43-47 with a three-note melody from "Taps," which is based on the notes of an E major triad (E G# B).

**BARS 48-56:** Hendrix initiates the song's final theme ("outro") at 2:43. While playing this simple melody, he quickly turns the wah pedal on and off by rocking it back and forth, engaging the on/off switch each time he steps forward on the pedal. This is hard to do! Hendrix would facilitate this technique by removing the little rubber spacers at the front



ALLAN ROSES

38 trem. pick 1 1/2 fdbk. 1 1/2 \*w/bar 2 full fdbk. full 2 vib. w/bar

\*shake and dive simultaneously pitch: G#

In time ♩ = 92 (2:20)  
N.C.(E) (B)

39 w/bar -2 1/2 w/bar -1 4/5 4 2 4 2 0 4 2 4

Slower ♩ = 46 (F#) (B) 3 rit.....

42 fdbk. fdbk. 12 12 12 12

pitch: C# A

45 16 12 12 16 12 12 16 12 12 16

Uni-vibe and wah

