

= Hear My Train A Comin ' =

" Hear My Train A Comin ' " (alternatively titled " Get My Heart Back Together ") is a blues @-@ inspired song written by Jimi Hendrix . It has been called " a powerful blues prayer based on the salvation @-@ train metaphor " of American folklore by biographer John McDermott . Hendrix recorded the song in live , studio , and impromptu settings several times between 1967 and 1970 , but never completed it to his satisfaction .

The documentary film Experience (1968) features the only version released during Hendrix 's lifetime . Hendrix played the song solo as an acoustic guitar country @-@ style blues and it is considered one of his most memorable performances . In 1973 , it was included in the film Jimi Hendrix and the accompanying soundtrack album . The song was also released as a single in the UK .

Hendrix often played " Hear My Train A Comin ' " in concert using a blues rock arrangement with accompaniment . He developed it into an extended improvisational guitar piece comparable to " Voodoo Child (Slight Return) " . There are several live performances in release ; according to music critics , the 1970 recording from the Berkeley Community Theatre is considered the definitive version . Recent Hendrix compilation albums , such as People , Hell and Angels and the Miami Pop Festival , include additional studio demo versions along with other live recordings .

= = Background and lyrics = =

" Hear My Train A Comin ' " is one of several blues @-@ oriented songs that were in Hendrix 's repertoire throughout his career . One of his earliest recordings with the Experience was his composition " Red House " , a blues song inspired by Albert King , which is included on the 1967 UK Are You Experienced debut album . In their early years , the Experience adapted and frequently performed other blues songs , including Howlin ' Wolf 's " Killing Floor " , B.B. King 's " Rock Me Baby " , Elmore James ' " Bleeding Heart " , and " Catfish Blues " , a medley of songs by Muddy Waters . They also played Muddy Waters ' " Hoochie Coochie Man " in 1967 with BBC Rhythm and Blues radio show host Alexis Korner accompanying the group on slide guitar .

Hendrix biographer Harry Shapiro describes " Hear My Train A Comin ' " as " delv [ing] deep into the well of blues history , recalling one of the classic motifs of the genre " and compares it to " Jim Crow Blues " and " Make My Getaway " , two earlier blues songs about " escap [ing] trouble , be it political , social or personal " . " Jim Crow Blues " , recorded in 1929 by Cow Cow Davenport , deals with getting away from racial segregation in an American town :

In " Make My Getaway " , recorded in 1951 , Big Bill Broonzy sings of leaving Arkansas to get over a broken relationship :

Biographer Steven Roby sees a parallel in Hendrix 's early life that is reflected in the lyrics for " Hear My Train A Comin ' " . When he left home at 18 , Hendrix departed by train for U.S. Army basic training in California . " Jimi 's confusion about leaving those he cared about coexisted with his eagerness to put his nightmarish existence in Seattle behind him " , writes Roby . Biographer John McDermott describes his lyrics as " a powerful blues prayer based on the salvation @-@ train metaphor running through American folklore of every color and faith " . Hendrix 's earliest recorded version in 1967 includes the verses

After an energetic guitar solo , Hendrix announces " Can you dig that , you see me gettin ' it together , I 'm tryin ' to get my heart together that 's all " and concludes by singing

He nearly always introduced the song as " Getting My Heart Back Together Again " or " Get My Heart Back Together " , the latter of which was used for the first release of the song in 1971 . In his August 1970 handwritten notes for the track listing of his proposed fourth studio album , Hendrix listed the song as " Getting My Heart Back Together " . It is unclear why it was renamed " Hear My Train A Comin ' " for subsequent releases , although Hendrix sometimes introduced songs in concert using alternate names . Occasionally he added a train reference to the song title , such as " Lonesome Train " , " I See My Train " , and " Waitin ' Down at the Train Station " . As Hendrix developed the song , he added to the lyrics and included " I 'm gonna be a voodoo child " , a

reference to his 1968 composition " Voodoo Child (Slight Return) " . However , he stayed with the same theme and often prefaced his performances with a short commentary , such as at one of his best @-@ known performances in Berkeley , California , in 1970 :

Here 's a story that a lot of us have been through ... About a cat runnin ' around town and his old lady , she don 't want him around and a whole lot of people from across the tracks are puttin ' him down . And nobody don 't want to face up to it but the cat might have somethin ' , only everybody 's against him because the cat might be a little different . So he goes on the road to be a Voodoo Child , come back to be a Magic Boy .

= = Composition and early live releases = =

" Hear My Train A Comin ' " was usually performed at a slow to andante tempo (65 to 80 beats per minute) centered on one chord with breaks . The first known recordings were made by the BBC on December 15 , 1967 , with Noel Redding on bass and Mitch Mitchell on drums . Redding and / or Mitchell also provide backing vocals during Hendrix 's vocal . In contrast to the subdued vocal sections , the middle section features highly charged guitar soloing and accompaniment . Two takes were recorded , both lasting about five minutes . The second take was broadcast on December 24 , 1967 , for the Top Gear radio program . The first take recorded was released in 1988 on the Radio One album ; both are included on BBC Sessions .

Around the same time , Peter Neal was making a short film documentary about the Experience , titled Experience (also known as See My Music Talking) . On December 19 , 1967 , he captured Hendrix playing an impromptu solo version of " Hear My Train A Comin ' " . The filming took place during a publicity photo session at the London studio of photographer Bruce Fleming , who had photographed the British album cover for Are You Experienced . For the shoot , a twelve @-@ string Zemaitis acoustic guitar restrung for a left @-@ handed player was conveniently on hand . Hendrix , seated on a stool against a white backdrop , sang while playing the guitar . After a false start , he settles into the song , which biographer Keith Shadwick describes as " 100 percent country blues ... s [ung] with great feeling , however artificial the circumstances of the session may have been " . Hendrix 's acoustic guitar playing shows familiarity with the styles of Lead Belly , Robert Johnson , and Skip James . Music writer Michael Fairchild compares some of his guitar techniques to those found in 1928 recordings by Tommy Johnson , such as " Big Fat Mama " and " Big Road Blues " . The guitar was tuned down two whole steps (C ? F ? B ? ? E ? ? G ? C) , perhaps influenced by Lead Belly 's twelve @-@ string style . At the end of the 3 : 05 performance , Hendrix laughs it off with " Did you think I could do that ? " In addition to the 1968 documentary , the " Hear My Train A Comin ' " performance is included in the 1973 film Jimi Hendrix and accompanying soundtrack album (re @-@ released on Blues) . In the UK , it was released by Reprise Records as a single in 1973 with the Experience 's adaptation of B.B. King 's " Rock Me Baby " recorded at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967 as the B @-@ side .

In March 1968 , Hendrix recorded another impromptu performance of the song with Paul Caruso on harmonica , a friend from Hendrix 's Greenwich Village days . It was recorded at Hendrix 's suite at the Drake Hotel in New York City , where he lived for a while during the recording of Electric Ladyland at the Record Plant . Caruso described it as " very simple , pure , like Lightnin ' Hopkins ' earlier work . " It is included on West Coast Seattle Boy : The Jimi Hendrix Anthology released in 2010 . For subsequent versions , Hendrix gradually developed " Hear My Train A Comin ' " from a shorter , blues @-@ oriented number into a longer , improvisational piece with extended guitar soloing as he had done with " Voodoo Child " . The transformation is apparent in three live recordings which were released in 1971 , which range from over nine to twelve minutes . Hendrix performed a nine @-@ minute version with the Gypsy Sun and Rainbows band at the Woodstock Festival on August 19 , 1969 . Shadwick describes Hendrix 's guitar solos as " fluently spectacular , stringing long , arching phrases together " . It was released on the Woodstock soundtrack follow @-@ up album Woodstock 2 , with the title " Get My Heart Back Together " (reissued on Woodstock and Live at Woodstock) . On May 30 , 1970 , during the Cry of Love tour , Hendrix with Mitchell and bassist Billy Cox were filmed performing the song at the Berkeley Community Theatre .

Several writers consider this rendition to be definitive , including Shadwick :

He solos with a distinctive flavour , for the most part entirely melodic rather than the usual fusion of chords , melody and outright sonic manipulation . As with every great improviser he had his own distinctive melodic shapes , and a lot of them crop up here . But he makes them fresh by placing them in new contexts , either by using different registers or one of his electronic effects (here wah @-@ wah or Uni @-@ Vibe) to alter the timbre and texture , or by reordering them to create different continuities of phrasing .

His performance , edited down to over four minutes , appears in the film Jimi Plays Berkeley by Peter Pilafian . The complete audio recording from Berkeley with different lengths of Hendrix 's introduction is included on the Rainbow Bridge album , Blues , and Voodoo Child : The Jimi Hendrix Collection . On July 30 , 1970 , Hendrix , Mitchell , and Cox performed outdoors in the upcountry region on the island of Maui , Hawaii . Manager Michael Jeffery had arranged for their concert as a contribution to another film , Rainbow Bridge , directed by Andy Warhol associate Chuck Wein . Due to technical problems , little of the concert footage was usable , although an edited " Hear My Train A Comin ' " is included in the movie (although none of the performances from the film appear on the so @-@ called Rainbow Bridge soundtrack album) . The complete audio recording is included on several bootleg albums of the Maui concerts .

= = Studio recordings = =

Hendrix recorded several studio demo versions of " Hear My Train A Comin ' " and some have appeared on various compilations over the years . Producer Alan Douglas issued the first version in 1975 on the second of his controversial albums , Midnight Lightning . It was fashioned from a demo recorded by the Experience on April 2 or 9 , 1969 . Douglas erased Redding 's bass part and overdubbed new bass , guitar , and percussion parts by musicians who had never recorded with Hendrix . Shadwick describes it as " painfully out of tune " and its release as " unfortunate " ; it has not been reissued .

At a February 17 , 1969 , rehearsal at the Olympic Studios before their upcoming London concerts , multiple takes of " Hear My Train A Comin ' " were recorded by the Experience . The first take was later included on the 2000 The Jimi Hendrix Experience box set (re @-@ released on Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues : Jimi Hendrix) . During their following appearances at the Royal Albert Hall on February 18 and 24 (which turned out to be their last UK shows) , the Experience were filmed and recorded performing the song . These have not been officially released because of contract disputes , but are frequently bootlegged . Two additional demos were recorded at the Record Plant in New York City in 1969 . One , recorded on April 7 by the Experience , is included on 2010s Valleys of Neptune . On May 21 , a second demo was recorded during Hendrix 's first recording session with Billy Cox on bass and Buddy Miles on drums , who later performed on the live Band of Gypsys album . It was issued on People , Hell and Angels in 2013 .

= = Additional live recordings = =

Previously unreleased recordings of " Hear My Train A Comin ' " continue to be issued along with re @-@ releases . Several amateur concert recordings are also free to stream from the Experience Hendrix official website .

5 / 18 / 68 Miami Pop Festival , Hallandale , Florida (7 : 58) ? Miami Pop Festival (released 2013)

10 / 10 / 68 Winterland Ballroom second show , San Francisco (11 : 33) ? The Jimi Hendrix Concerts (released 1982 , re @-@ released 2011 Winterland)

4 / 27 / 69 Oakland Coliseum , Oakland , California (10 : 25) ? Live at the Oakland Coliseum (released 1998)

7 / 7 / 69 The Dick Cavett Show , New York City (2 : 26) ? Jimi Hendrix : The Dick Cavett Show (Hendrix is backed by the show 's Bob Rosengarden Orchestra , DVD released 2002)

12 / 31 / 69 Fillmore East first show , New York City (9 : 01) ? Band of Gypsys 2 (an early

contender for the original Band of Gypsys album , released 1986 , re @-@ released 1999 Live at the Fillmore East)

7 / 4 / 70 Atlanta International Pop Festival , Byron , Georgia (5 : 25) ? Stages (released 1991)