

 There is no better place to listen to music than inside your vehicle. There is something about the acoustics (and that particular environment) that promote music listening. Many years ago, I read an interview with the Rolling Stones in which Keith Richards noted that he would listen to demos inside the car while driving - because the finished product needed to sound good in the car. I couldn't agree more ... there is something about "driving" and "music" that mix quite nicely.

Over the past few months, I have spent a a lot of time driving to and from Kerrville for some Friday clinic patient visits. At 100 miles one way, it's typically about three and a half hours of total driving every Friday. Though this sounds like a lot, it really hasn't gotten "old" because the time can be utilized effectively - listening to podcasts and music on the iPod (the "new school" way) or CD (the "old school" way!).

Therein lies the roots to what will become a regular feature here: Playlist Ponderings. This week, I am going to start with a tremendous album by Jimi Hendrix from 1967 - Axis: Bold As Love.

Hendrix has had a special place in my world from as far back as I can remember.

His music was what originally got me thinking about playing guitar. One of the few guitar books I ever read was "Jimi Hendrix: Note For Note". My father had a copy of "Are You Experienced?" sitting in the record collection (back in the days of vinyl). I even quoted Hendrix in my high school valedictory speech (which is another story on it's own).

It was always his album "Electric Ladyland" that I found so fascinating. That was the Hendrix album that really displayed his solo guitar chops. Of course, that was until I kept reading about "Axis: Bold As Love". Then I heard Eric Johnson at the [Cheatham Street Warehouse](http://www.cheathamstreet.com/ "Cheatham Street Warehouse") in San Marcos in 1988 ... playing what I later found were songs from "Axis".

On recent drives, I popped in the "Axis" CD ... and was acutely reminded of what an incredible album it really is. The bass drum pounding and strong guitar rhythm in ["Spanish Castle Magic"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish?Castle?Magic "Spanish Castle Magic") gives me shivers. I can close my eyes and see Eric Johnson playing this song live. I think it was the guttural roar of the ES355 that made me stand up and take note! ["Little Wing"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little?Wing "Little Wing") is a phenomenal and beautiful song, oftentimes performed live by none other than Stevie Ray Vaughan. And then there is one of the most important songs from my teenage years, a song considered by many as an "individualist anthem" - ["If 6 Was 9"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/If?6?Was?9 "If 6 Was 9").

This is a song that I discovered as I was exploring the history and cultural significance of the '60s, a song that had lyrics that resonated deeply within me. It was also part of the movie ["Easy Rider"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Easy?Rider "Easy Rider (1969)"), which had historical and cultural significance in its own right.

And then the album ends with ["Bold As Love"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bold?as?Love?(song) "Bold As Love"), which ties it all together so very nicely. If you want a version of this song that does justice to the original (as many subsequent remakes of Hendrix' songs don't do!), refer to John Mayer's recent release.

It's hard for me to believe that this album is almost as old as I am. I can say without reservation that the songs are timeless - and many of the classic cuts on this album sound as good and as stunning as they probably did in 1967. Forty-two years have not put any dust on this one. ♦