

# Psychedelic rock and the doors



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Biography: " Psychedelic rock is a very famous class of rock music which is influenced or inspired by psychedelic culture. To really understand this genre of music it is important to state exactly what was psychedelic rock. Why it becomes important to see where this form of music originated since the roots of the movement is what inspired the artists of this time period and is also the reason for its evolution. During the era of the flower-child, there was restlessness and strong undercurrents among the youth across North America and Europe, which was looking for freedom from existing societal expectations and norms of that time. This was to become the ' hippie culture' that took the world by storm in the late 1950's and 60's. Among the many ways in which hippies were to make history, along with their commune living and fascination for eastern mysticism, religion and sexual liberation, was the music that characterized the decades of the flower child."

(Chatterjee; Buzzle. com, 2010)

During this time hallucinogenic drugs were just entering public consciousness, and LSD, mescaline and ' magic mushrooms', were commonly used and their effects compounded with the combination of alcohol and marijuana lead artists and musicians using these psychedelic drug cocktails to have out-of-body experiences, mind-altering state of awareness and a disconnect from reality, the music that they composed in the shadowy world of hallucinogenic drugs, came to be known as psychedelic music, or psychedelic rock, in homage to the psychedelic drugs that gave rise to the compositions. In the midst of such widespread domination, it was hardly likely that the arts were to be left behind, posters and album covers were just a few of the expressions of 1960's psychedelic art, characterized

by their kaleidoscopic colors, diffraction patterns and entropic motifs (Chatterjee; Buzzle. com, 2010). Many rock and folk musicians began to include drug lyrics in their songs as they were using drugs.

The Holy Modal Rounders was an American folk music duo from the Lower East Side of New York City which started in the early 1960s, consisting of Peter Stampfel and Steve Weber. Their unique blend of folk music revival and psychedelic rock gave them a cult-like following from the late 1960s into the 1970s. For a time, the band also featured prolific and famous playwright and actor, Sam Shepard. (Wikipedia. com, 2010) The group The 13th Floor Elevators was an American rock band from Austin, Texas in 1965 was the first group to declare themselves as a psychedelic rock band. The band included guitarist and vocalist Roky Erickson, electric jug player Tommy Hall, and guitarist Stacy Sutherland, which existed from 1965 to 1969. During their career, the band released four LPs and seven 45s for the International Artists record label. Subsequent to the group 13th Floor Elevators, The Beatles began experimenting with the LSD in 1965 and they introduced most of the major elements of psychedelic sounds. They began to include drug references in their songs in 1965 and more explicitly in 1966 (Wikipedia. com, 2010).

The band, The Byrds moved from pure folk rock to psychedelic rock. They made use of Indian ragas and free jazz and the lyrics that referred to drug use. In one of Britain's bands, The Yard Birds moved to the psychedelic usage, adding influences to songs. In the United States, the music scene continued to develop and psychedelic rock began to impact on pop music. The Beach Boys had been experimenting with LSD from 1965 and  
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psychedelic was a major part of the songs. The Haight District-Ashbury District in San Francisco was the center for psychedelic music because of the prominent use of LSD, but there were other cities in America contributed to the new genre but not as centered as Haight-Ashbury.

#### Style Characteristics:

Psychedelic rock music had its characteristics. The main elements include electric guitars and heavy drums. However, The Beatles put some Indian Raag in the music. The fusion done by The Beatles was further continued by Jim Morrison in some tracks. However, in general the instrumentals are lead base electric guitars and drums with occasional piano and sometimes sitar. The selection of the instruments was based on the levels and grades of performances. Sometimes leads with drums worked and at places we observe whole orchestras followed by leads, base guitars and pianos. It is right to say that heavy metal; Psychedelic rock has no particular domain of instruments. So like music in this time used different instruments and was not restricted to one particular one.

#### My Own Personal Comments:

The Doors were an American rock band that was started in 1965. This band produced a string of hits in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Britannica. com, 2010). This band was founded by singer and poet, Jim Morrison, who became one of rock music's greatest figures. The Doors' original members included: Jim Morrison, vocals; Ray Manzarek, who played the keyboards, Robbie Krieger, who played on the lead guitar, and John Densmore, who played the drums. This band included a combination of backgrounds in blues and

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classical music with the improvisational daring of a rock band (Britannica. com, 2010). With Jim Morrison writing poetry which was called Beat poetry, Robbie Kreiger set these lyrics to music. Kreiger and Dunsmore both belonged to the Psychelic Rangers. (Charlton, p. 152).

Manzarek and Morrison were friends from the film school in the University of California at Los Angeles. They conceived the idea of forming the group after the singer recited a poem to the keyboardist. This was on a southern beach of California,. Morrison derived the band's name from Aldous Huxley's book titled " The Doors of Perception", which also referred to a line in a poem. (Charlton, p. 152) The Doors got a reputation for pushing the boundaries of rock composition, both lyrically and musically, in performances at Los Angeles' Sunset Strip. (Britannica. com, 2010) The doors breakthrough hit, " Light My Fire", became an anthem in 1967. It was songs such as The End, an eleven minute drama which had sexually explicit lyrics and a swirling, oscillation arrangement that gave the band reputation as one of rock's most controversial, potent, and theatrical acts. The group was indeed banned from the Whisky-A-Go-Go event in Los Angeles after an earlier performance of the song. (Britannica. com, 2010)

Though the band's ambitious music involved everything from German cabaret to Chicago blues, their string of pop hits made them to be criticized by some people as a teenybopper act. (Britannica. com, 2010) This troubled Morrison deeply as he really wanted acceptance as a serious artist. By the time of the release of the band's third album in 1968, Morrison had created an ego for himself, the Lizard King. Morrison's poem " The Celebration of the Lizard King" was printed in the record jacket. (Chatterjee; Buzzle. com, 2010)

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Morrison's concert performances were marred by outrageous stunts, and in 1969 he was arrested for exposing himself on stage, in Miami. The charges were later dropped, but the incident served notice of Morrison's physical decline, in part because of his addiction to alcohol. Morrison took increasing concentrated in his poetry, some of which were published. The group's tours became less frequent. The band reestablished their artistic integrity with the blues steeped "Morrison Hotel" in 1970. After the group's sixth album, "L. A. Woman" in 1971 Morrison went to Paris, where he wanted to pursue a literary career. He died there of heart failure at the age of 27 in the year of 1971. (Britannica. com, 2010)

The early death of Morrison only enhanced his status as the exemplary rock showman and troubled artist for successive generations. In absence of Morrison, the group produced two albums before breaking up but were reduced to just an instrumental trio. (Charlton, p. 153) The remaining band members briefly reunited in 1978 to record "An American Prayer", providing backing music for poetry that Jim Morrison had wrote and decided to record it after his death. Manzarek produced albums for the punk band X. In death, Morrison was lionized by fans for generations, both as an icon for youth and as an influence on singers such as, Echo and Iggy Pop Pearl Jam's, Eddie Vedder and Bunnymen's, Ian McCulloch. The band's releases have continued to sell in the millions, and "The Doors", a 1991 movie, was a critical and popular success. The band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1993.

Jim Morrison was born in December 8 1963 and died on July 3, 1971. Ray Manzarek was born on February 12, 1935 in Chicago. Robby Krieger was  
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born on Jan 8, 1946 in Los Angeles. John Densmore was born on December 1, 1945 in Los Angeles. They produced the following albums: "The Doors" in 1967, "Strange Days" in 1967, "Light My Fire" in 1967, "The Unknown Soldier" in 1968, "Hello, I Love You" 1968, "Riders On The Storm" 1971 and "LA Woman" in 1971.

To me, if you listen to The Doors' album titled "Waiting For The sun", you will come to love it. It is one album that you will recommend to your friends. One song that touched me most is "Hello, I love you". It is a song that basically talks about love. The last verse was written by Jim Morrison three years prior to the album recordings, while he was observing an attractive African American girl at Venice Beach. The verse states: "Sidewalk crouches at her feet; Like a dog that begs for something sweet; Do you hope to make her see you, fool; Do you hope to pluck this dusky jewel?" (Wikipedia. com, 2010)

The band continued to perform, with little success, and finally broke up in 1972. In 2002, Kreiger and Manzarek reunited to form The Doors of the 21st Century. Densmore, who says he wasn't invited to join the new group, went to court and eventually got a ruling preventing the group from using The Doors in its name. The group now performs as Riders On The Storm (White, 2010).

In conclusion, Psychedelic Rock during its time revolutionized the whole culture. Not only in America or England, it influenced music from all over the world. It was the first time when the concept of Asian and Western music emerged and Sir John Lennon blended both music forms. Jim Morrison was no

doubt the pioneer and is still worshiped by the admirers. The Doors worked as a role model for many new and up and coming bands and his music is present even in bands music and lyrics today. To me, it is so sad to lose brilliant artists, Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Bon Scott and the list could go on and on and could state how each one of these young artists effected their time that they lived and how they affect the music now. We must all remember those who shaped music from its earliest beginnings.

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