

George Harrison

09 June 2017



*Wearing his Donald
Trump costume*

George Harrison (born in Liverpool, 1943 and died in Los Angeles 2001) was an English guitarist, singer, songwriter and music & film producer who achieved international fame as the lead guitarist of English musical foursome The Beatles. Often referred to as "the quiet Beatle", Harrison embraced Hinduism, broadening the musical scope of his fellow Beatles by incorporating Indian instruments. Although most Beatles songs were written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney, many of the group's albums from 1965 onward included at least two Harrison compositions, including "Taxman", "Within You Without You", "While My Guitar Gently Weeps", "Here Comes The Sun" and "Something" which became The Beatles' second most popular song performed by other artists.

Q: Mr. Harrison, an honor to have you with us and as always, the questions pop up as fast as the brief description is written.

GH: George, please. Mr. Harrison is far too formal for me.

Q: George, then. Okay, George, let's proceed backwards in time, starting with today. Being an Englishman you would be familiar with the United Kingdom, so....

GH: *(interrupting me...)* The Liverpool part of it, anyway...

Q: Yes, yes....so what about Theresa May, Jeremy Corbyn and the elections just the other day? Your impressions?

GH: Calling for elections not required is risky, isn't it? Overall, the opposition to leaving the European Union will insist on another go at a referendum, at least.

Q: You must know my GAGs, who predicted the PM would prevail. It looks like that happened but she, Theresa May has been wounded politically. (Confession, I know almost zero about British politics).

GH: Merry Old England....so when are the politically wounded anything new?

Q: Any thoughts or predictions?

GH: It seems another example of inability to accept election results. This is a small step towards a bigger thing, not limited or unique to Great Britain at all, it's a world wide trend, where people are beginning to question government, period. The ideas of switching government back to the direction the disadvantaged-group-of-the-moment prefers, are really just pieces of society deciding more and more government is the wrong way forward.

Q: It seems that government should be like music; we can listen, compose or play what we want when we want or just turn it off.

GH: Yes, like religion, food and so many things. Good luck locating the government off-switch, but I will tell you all, it exists and will be found!

Q: You were quite a ukelele player. What brought that about?

GH: It's a simpler instrument, four strings and small, even ugly. It means the player has to be good. It isn't like a tuba where the size of it says as much as the sound coming out. The ukulele, like the Spanish cuatro, its close relative and predecessor, means listeners are required to appreciate the output, not the machinery. It also represents a good opportunity to coordinate two or three players on the same tune, each focusing on a different range. It creates a unique sound. Six string guitars have been doing this for a long time, and combinations of strings, like the banjo, are also common but the ukulele is the basic form and keeps a string instrument picker like myself connected to basics and roots of playing them.

Q: You learned and got pretty good - I'd say damned good - at playing the sitar, which is anything but a basic or simple instrument. What a sound!

GH: A complex building still needs good basic bricks and the complexity shows good application of simple pieces. Isn't this everything in the universe? All of the complicated pieces are just patterns of basic things built together. Nice to see and have, but always good to remember and emphasize basics. My love for the ukulele.

Q: Did you like your fellow Beatles?

GH: Always and I still do. I always will.

Q: The several wives of your bandmates all observed the special connections even they could not penetrate or duplicate, what they saw as the glue or force, between John, Paul, George and Ringo.

GH: This is simply the life plan we all made, to be The Beatles and perform.

Q: Did this plan include a destiny to become one of the most well known performers of all time?

GH: Yes and no; the possibility was written in but was not a certainty. Free will and all, you understand. We just as easily we could have been obscure by comparison to what we became.

Q: Did you enjoy the early years more than the later 60s of massive fame & fortune, the other way around, or was it a steady pace throughout? How about for John, Paul and Ringo?

GH: Ringo most certainly had a great time early on before the big time came but he liked that, too. Paul will have to say for himself, and he has. He's still mucking about on Earth, you can do medium free interviews. John went through the biggest growth, he went from a bit of a hooligan to much more philosophical, no mystery to any of that. I especially enjoyed the time we began to include Indian instruments. I will say, the guitar work in front of the big crowds was a thrill. Shea Stadium in New York City, the Ed Sullivan Show and things like that were a lot of fun for me.

Q: Do you believe the title of "The Quiet Beatle" was accurate or fair?

GH: Yes and I don't care. I never did. I was a lot quieter publicly, that's very clear but how quiet a personality could any guitar player be as a member of The Beatles? I wasn't always so quiet away from the public eye.

Q: Which peer groups did you admire?

GH: I still do and I'd say The Rolling Stones. Their stage performances are something every performer wishes to reach; the energy and sound of what they do on stage is not lost to their studio recordings, or the other way 'round. Which group can do that? The Beatles never came that close. Jagger wanted to strut, wail and wave that microphone more than anything, which is useless in the studio.

Q: Is there one thing you liked and admired most about them?

GH: The American country & western numbers. We flirted with the American rock & roll style and did a few numbers well, we even messed about with some of the popular western style stuff, like Buck Owens. Ringo loved that stuff, once John said we should do it. We never did those out-of-genre songs nearly as well as The Rolling Stones achieved. Some of their stuff sounded as good as a dedicated American country & western performer.

Q: If there is one thing you could do differently, personally and away from music, what would it be?

GH: Not smoke cigarettes or as many.

Q: How about musically, as a professional composer & performer?

GH: Nothing. I am more than satisfied with that part of George Harrison.

Q: The immense popularity of The Beatles and the social impact the group both had & reflected, what do you believe that represented?

GH: The end of the established order. We were part of the hippies, Woodstock, Jimi Hendrix, make love not war and all those things. We were socially palatable enough to bring both ends of the rope along; Elvis Presley scared away a bunch of people with his hips and negro sound; the biggest offence we committed was mop top. The youngsters could dance to us without a hall monitor. The Rolling Stones did a lot of the same, a little more edgy but the British origins helped. That reputation for respectability, reserved, still upper lip and all the rest put a wrapping on the process which helped things along, by not hindering us.

Q: Were the many years of smoking cigarettes the cause of the cancer to which you succumbed?

GH: Yes.

Q: Unpleasant?

GH: Except for the ending, which was more than worth it.

Q: Your return home was positive?

GH: Yes, because John was there; that alone was worth the unpleasantness of the disease.

Q: Did you miss him? On Earth?

GH: Like a brother or two even. The day he died ripped my soul into pieces, but I soon came to realize that is not possible. It felt like it for a few days and weeks.

Q: Your relationship with him wasn't always perfect.

GH: No, just like any. It wouldn't be a friendship if it were.

Q: What did you think of John's murderer?

GH: I felt sorry for him and still do. He threw away quite a few lives, John's and his own for starters and how many people in his family and John's? That's a huge loss when it's added up and I've always felt sorry for someone who does that. The idea of blame or responsibility is human, and jail sentences as punishment don't change the loss. That is what it is, and for that I've always felt sorry for Chapman.

Q: I've dragged you along, George, for 3 pages, so I must ask, do you have a message you'd like to give? Something you'd like to say to at least my audience on this website? I assume you can see its size, scope and composition!

GH: I can, of course but I will not say something to your regular readership that would be different than if I knew this were going to a few million people worldwide. On top of that, you haven't dragged me anywhere; if this were a drag, I would not have shown up.

The Traveling Wilburys were great fun, since you didn't ask, I mention it. It could have and should have lasted longer but that was fine as it ended up, I really enjoyed it and it was great for what we did.

Away from me and about the world, I will tell you all this; the greatest prize is not what happens or what you get, in life. The prize is life itself. The ingredients are the human focus; what I mean to say is, neither ingredients nor recipe matter as much as the baked cake. On Earth there are bad cakes, like what people think of Chapman. My message is, all of Heaven's cakes are good, and the differences are what make them worth baking.

Q: George, thank you.

GH: My thanks to you for the visit, be well and keep your eyes on the ball out beyond the immediate issues.