

METRO PLUS

## Notes from an inner search

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### REJI VARGHESE pays tribute to George Harrison on his 15th death anniversary

I still recall George Harrison with long hair and a beard stepping up to the mike to sing ‘My Sweet Lord’. There was something strangely spiritual to it. He looked blissful when he sang, ‘I really want see you... I really want to know you Lord’.

Of the four Beatles, George Harrison was the most spiritual, the most detached from the music business and the most troubled by the trappings of fame. “Everybody dreams of being rich and famous,” Harrison said, “Once you get rich and famous, you think, ‘This wasn’t it.’”

Even though George Harrison will be best remembered for his time with the Beatles, to understand the artiste better, one must strip away the facade of George Harrison, the Beatle. Harrison himself put it best when he said “Beatle George is like a suit or shirt that I once wore on occasion, and until the end of my life people may see that shirt and mistake it for me.”

Being in a band with two of the greatest songwriters of all time meant that many of Harrison’s songs were overlooked for the Beatles albums, even though songs like ‘Here Comes The Sun’, ‘Something’, and ‘While My Guitar Gently Weeps’ were on a par with anything Lennon and McCartney had ever written.

By the time the Beatles broke up, Harrison had a huge backlog of unpublished songs and music producer Phil Spector was stunned at the quantity and quality of songs when he first listened to them. As Spector recalls in an interview: “It was endless. He had literally hundreds of songs and each one was better than the rest.”

*All Things Must Pass* would be the defining album of George Harrison’s career. Both the album and the single ‘My Sweet Lord’ went on to become massive hits world over. It was the first time a Beatles solo artiste had occupied both the Number 1 album and the Number 1 single spots.

The success was sweet vindication for Harrison, as many of these very songs were demoed to the Beatles, and were rejected. To me, *All Things Must Pass* is the best solo album by any of the Beatles. Lennon’s first solo album, *Plastic Ono Band*, released the same year, was the

music of a turbulent soul searching for meaning. *All Things Must Pass*, on the other hand, is the music of a man who had found meaning in life.

Harrison was not just trying to write an album of hit songs; he was baring his soul. There was depth to the song writing and the topics ranged from addressing mortality in 'Art of Dying' and the politics of religion in 'Awaiting On You All', to philosophy in 'Beware of Darkness', and his unforgettable love letter to God, 'My Sweet Lord'.

George Harrison passed away 15 years ago today. I remember reading a statement from his family that said, "George left this world as he lived in it, conscious of God, fearless in death, and at peace, surrounded by family and friends."

He often said, "Everything can wait but the search for God cannot wait."

'All Things Must Pass' is a reflection on the impermanence of all material things. It is as true a reflection as one will ever get of the real George Harrison.

***'All Things Must Pass' is a reflection on the impermanence of all material things.***