

= All Things Must Pass (song) =

" All Things Must Pass " is a song by English musician George Harrison , issued in November 1970 as the title track to his triple album of the same name . Billy Preston released the song originally ? as " All Things (Must) Pass " ? on his Apple Records album Encouraging Words (1970) , after the Beatles had rejected it for inclusion on their Let It Be album in January 1969 . The composition reflects the influence of the Band 's sound and communal music @-@ making on Harrison , after he had spent time with the group in Woodstock , New York , in late 1968 , while Timothy Leary 's poem " All Things Pass " , a psychedelic adaptation of the Tao Te Ching , provided inspiration for his song lyrics .

The subject matter deals with the transient nature of human existence , and in Harrison 's All Things Must Pass reading , words and music combine to reflect impressions of optimism against fatalism . On release , together with Barry Feinstein 's album cover image , commentators viewed the song as a statement on the Beatles ' break @-@ up . Widely regarded as one of Harrison 's finest compositions , its rejection by his former band has provoked comment from biographers and reviewers . Music critic Ian MacDonald described " All Things Must Pass " as " the wisest song never recorded by The Beatles " , while author Simon Leng considers it " perhaps the greatest solo Beatle composition " . The recording was co @-@ produced by Phil Spector in London ; it features an orchestral arrangement by John Barham and contributions from musicians such as Ringo Starr , Pete Drake , Bobby Whitlock , Eric Clapton and Klaus Voormann .

Although the Beatles failed to formally record the song , a 1969 solo demo by Harrison appears on their compilation Anthology 3 (1996) . An early version from the All Things Must Pass sessions was released on Harrison 's posthumous compilation Early Takes : Volume 1 in 2012 . Paul McCartney performed " All Things Must Pass " at the Concert for George tribute in November 2002 , a year after Harrison 's death . Jim James , the Waterboys , Klaus Voormann and Yusuf Islam , and Sloan Wainwright are among the other artists who have covered the song .

= = Background = =

Like his friend Eric Clapton , George Harrison was inspired by Music from Big Pink , the seminal debut album from the Band , the former backing group for Bob Dylan . Released in July 1968 , Music from Big Pink was partly responsible for Harrison 's return to the guitar , his first instrument , after he had spent two years attempting to master the more complex Indian sitar . Harrison duly shared his enthusiasm with the British music press , declaring Big Pink " the new sound to come from America " , drummer Levon Helm later recalled , thus helping to establish the Band internationally . In appreciation , Robbie Robertson , the Band 's guitarist , extended an invitation to Harrison to stop by in Woodstock , New York , when the opportunity arose .

Late in 1968 , after producing sessions in Los Angeles for a solo album by Apple Records signing Jackie Lomax , Harrison spent Thanksgiving and much of December in upstate New York , where he renewed his friendship with a now semi @-@ retired Dylan and took part in informal jam sessions with the Band . According to Helm , they discussed making a possible " fireside jam " album with Clapton and an Apple Films " rock western " called Zachariah , but neither project progressed beyond the planning stage . The bucolic surroundings proved fruitful for Harrison as a songwriter , producing his first collaboration with Dylan , " I 'd Have You Anytime " , and leading him to write " All Things Must Pass " . He later described the latter song as a " Robbie Robertson ? Band type of tune " , and said that he always imagined it being sung by Helm .

= = Composition = =

While discussing " All Things Must Pass " with music journalist Timothy White in 1987 , Harrison recalled that his " starting point " for the composition was Robertson 's " The Weight " ? a song that had " a religious and a country feeling to it " . Musically , the verses of " All Things Must Pass " are set to a logical climb within the key of E ; the brief choruses form a departure from this , with their

inclusion of a B minor chord rather than the more expected major voicing . Author Ian Inglis notes that the composition incorporates the same " modes , cadences and suspensions " found in Band songs such as " The Weight " and " The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down " .

For his lyrics , Harrison drew inspiration from " All Things Pass " , a poem published in Timothy Leary 's 1966 book *Psychedelic Prayers after the Tao Te Ching* . In his 1980 autobiography , *I Me Mine* , Harrison refers to the idea for the song originating from " all kinds of mystics and ex @-@ mystics " , including Leary . Like later Harrison compositions such as " Here Comes the Sun " , " So Sad " and " Blow Away " , the lyrical and emotional content is based around metaphors involving the weather and the cycle of nature . Harrison states in the opening lines of verse one : " Sunrise doesn 't last all morning / A cloudburst doesn 't last all day " .

According to Harrison biographer Simon Leng , the lyrics reflect " life 's ephemeral character " and the " transitory " nature of love . Inglis suggests that the song is " [o] stensibly " about " the end of a love affair " . He and theologian Dale Allison note the optimism offered in Harrison 's words , since , as Leng puts it , " a new day always dawns . " Although " All Things Must Pass " avoids religiosity , Allison writes that its statement on the " all @-@ inclusive " transience of things in the material world explains why so much of its 1970 parent album , *All Things Must Pass* , " finds hope and meaning only in God , who does not pass away " . The song 's main message is offered in its middle eight :

All things must pass

None of life 's strings can last

So I must be on my way

And face another day .

Ultimately , the cycle of nature offers " consolation " , Leng writes , as further evidenced in the verse @-@ three lines " Now the darkness only stays at night time " and " Daylight is good at arriving at the right time " .

The lyrics underwent some minor changes after Harrison presented the song to the Beatles in January 1969 , when they began working at London 's Twickenham Film Studios for the so @-@ called *Get Back* project (released as the *Let It Be* album and film) . He had initially written the second line of verse two as the more literal " A wind can blow those clouds away " , but bootlegs from the sessions reveal John Lennon suggesting the word " mind " to introduce a bit of " psychedelia " into the song . Similarly , the repeated line " it 's not always gonna be this grey " was originally " It 's not always been this grey " in verses one and two .

= = Pre @-@ All Things Must Pass recording history = =

= = = The Beatles ' *Get Back* rehearsals = = =

In contrast with the creative equality he enjoyed with Dylan and the Band in Woodstock , Harrison returned to the Beatles fold and found the same discordant atmosphere that had blighted the *White Album* sessions in 1968 . Early on during the *Get Back* rehearsals ? and tellingly , music journalist John Harris notes , before the arrival that day of Lennon and his partner Yoko Ono ? Harrison enthused with fellow Beatles Ringo Starr and Paul McCartney about the Band 's camaraderie and group ethos , saying : " They 're just living , and they happen to be a band as well . "

On 2 January , day one of the Twickenham film shoot , Harrison introduced " All Things Must Pass " , and the band worked on the song intermittently over the next four days of filming . In the search for a suitable musical arrangement , Harrison stressed his preference for a " feel " akin to the Band , a suggestion that resulted in Lennon switching from guitar to Lowrey organ , a keyboard favoured by the Band 's Garth Hudson . During the Twickenham rehearsals , the Beatles also discussed the idea of Harrison performing " All Things Must Pass " solo for inclusion in the proposed film .

They returned to the song briefly towards the end of January , by which time the project had moved location to their own Apple Studio , in central London ? one of Harrison 's conditions for rejoining the Beatles after his temporary walkout on 10 January . Although the band gave a fair amount of time to " All Things Must Pass " , it was ultimately pushed aside , just as other Harrison compositions

including " Old Brown Shoe " , " Isn 't It a Pity " , " Let It Down " and " I Me Mine " received a lukewarm reception , particularly from Lennon . David Fricke of Rolling Stone has referred to this period as a " struggle " for Harrison " against the patronizing restrictions of writing within and for the Beatles " . Doug Sulpy and Ray Schweighardt , authors of Get Back : The Unauthorized Chronicle of The Beatles ' Let It Be Disaster , observe that Lennon and McCartney routinely rejected Harrison 's songs , " even though some were far better than their own " .

The Beatles never formally recorded " All Things Must Pass " , and only rehearsal takes circulate on bootleg compilations from the sessions . The Fly on the Wall bonus disc accompanying the McCartney @-@ instigated Let It Be ... Naked album (2003) includes a snippet of the Beatles indulging in some Band @-@ like chorusing on the song .

= = = Harrison 's solo demo = = =

During the Beatles ' Apple Studio session on 28 January , Harrison talked with Lennon and Ono about possibly doing a solo album of his unused songs , in order to " preserve this , the Beatle bit , more " . Lennon offered his support for the idea . While author Bruce Spizer has suggested that Lennon was keen to " spare " the band from having to work on Harrison 's songs , Sulpy and Schweighardt consider that Lennon 's enthusiasm was because such a solo project would allow him and Ono to continue their own recording activities " without causing friction within The Beatles " .

On 25 February 1969 , his 26th birthday , Harrison entered Abbey Road Studios alone and recorded a demo of the song , along with other recent compositions " Old Brown Shoe " and " Something " . With Ken Scott serving as engineer , he recorded two takes of " All Things Must Pass " , adding extra electric guitar onto the second . This version was eventually released in 1996 on the Beatles ' outtake collection Anthology 3 .

= = = Billy Preston 's version = = =

Soon after Harrison had begun talking publicly about making a solo album , during the final months of 1969 , he offered " All Things Must Pass " , along with the more recent " My Sweet Lord " , to Billy Preston for the latter 's album Encouraging Words . Through Harrison 's invitation , Preston had played keyboards for the Beatles once the Get Back / Let It Be sessions resumed at Apple Studio , where the 22 @-@ year @-@ old Texan had impressed with his superior musicianship and convivial presence . Preston was soon offered a recording deal with Apple Records , Encouraging Words being the second album under the contract .

Co @-@ produced by Harrison , Preston 's reading of " All Things Must Pass " betrays an obvious debt to his former mentor , Ray Charles . While Harrison 's later recording is generally viewed as the definitive version , Bruce Eder of AllMusic considers this treatment of the song the superior of the two . Preston 's version appeared in September 1970 , five months after the Beatles ' break @-@ up .

= = All Things Must Pass recording = =

While completing his production on Preston 's release , Harrison chose to record the song himself for what became the title track of his post @-@ Beatles solo debut , the triple album All Things Must Pass . In describing " All Things Must Pass " as a " haunting hymn about the mortality of everything " , author Elliot Huntley notes the added poignance in Harrison 's version , due to the death of his mother in July 1970 after a long period of illness .

With Phil Spector as his co @-@ producer , Harrison taped the basic track at Abbey Road Studios between 26 May and early in June . Other participants included Clapton , German bassist Klaus Voormann and Starr , the latter another avowed Band fan . Leng credits the song 's piano part to Bobby Whitlock , who also sang backing vocals with Clapton , his future bandmate in Derek and the Dominos . In his 2010 autobiography , Whitlock states that it was Preston who played the piano on " All Things Must Pass " , while his own contribution was pump organ , or harmonium . Although Leng

lists both Harrison and Clapton as having played acoustic guitar and Starr and Jim Gordon on drums , according to the personnel that Whitlock offers , neither Clapton nor Gordon played on the song . Among the overdubs on the track , Nashville session musician Pete Drake recorded a pedal @-@ steel guitar part during a brief visit to London , to participate in sessions for Harrison songs such as " Behind That Locked Door " and " I Live for You " .

Spector 's erratic behaviour during the All Things Must Pass sessions left Harrison to handle most of the project alone , but in August 1970 , after receiving a tape of Harrison 's early mixes of the songs , Spector provided him with written feedback and guidance . Spector wrote of " All Things Must Pass " , " This particular song is so good that any honest [vocal] performance by you is acceptable as far as I 'm concerned " , but he expressed his disapproval of the horns at the start of the track . In the words of authors Chip Madinger and Mark Easter , " clearer heads prevailed " and Jim Price and Bobby Keys ' horn parts were retained .

The recording opens with " unvaryingly steady " piano chords , Inglis writes , and what Leng terms " sensitive " string orchestration from John Barham , soon joined by the horns and Drake 's pedal steel . Leng highlights this combination as providing the song with its rising and falling musical moods , implying variously light and darkness ; Inglis writes of the musical arrangement mirroring the " competing impressions " of hope and melancholy found in Harrison 's lyrics . True to its Catskill roots , the recording evokes the Band 's " The Weight " and their eponymous second album , the tracks on which were similarly inspired by " the beauty of that autumn in Woodstock " , according to Helm .

= = Release and album artwork = =

Almost two years after Harrison wrote the song , " All Things Must Pass " was released in November 1970 , closing side three of the triple album in its original LP format . Despite its high retail price , All Things Must Pass was a major commercial success , comfortably outselling concurrent solo releases by Lennon and McCartney .

The song 's title was invariably seen as a statement on the demise of the Beatles , as commentators viewed the album as Harrison 's liberation from the artistic constraints imposed on him within the band . The album 's cover image , showing Harrison seated on his Friar Park lawn surrounded by four reclining garden gnomes ? thought to represent the Beatles ? was also viewed as reflecting this theme . While commenting that " All Things Must Pass " had " accrue [d] new layers of relevance " during the album 's creation , particularly with the death of Harrison 's mother , former Mojo editor Paul Du Noyer writes : " Nobody in November 1970 could have mistaken the title 's significance ... As if to cement the association of ideas , the wry cover picture has George in solitary splendour , surrounded by a quartet of gnomes . " In a 2001 interview , photographer Barry Feinstein admitted that the words " All Things Must Pass " had helped inspire his set @-@ up for the photo , saying : " What else could it be ? ... [It] was over with The Beatles , right ? And that title ... Very symbolic . "

= = Reception and legacy = =

On release , Ben Gerson of Rolling Stone described " All Things Must Pass " as " eloquently hopeful and resigned " while labelling the album " the music of mountain tops and vast horizons " . Beatles Forever author Nicholas Schaffner noted in 1977 , with reference to Harrison 's commercial and critical dominance over his former bandmates following the break @-@ up : " The very fact that the Beatles had kept George 's flowering talents so under wraps proved to be his secret weapon . " Schaffner named " All Things Must Pass " and " Beware of Darkness " as the two " most eloquent " songs on All Things Must Pass , " musically as well as lyrically " , with " mysterious , seductive melodies , over which faded strings and horns hover like Blue Jay Way fog " .

Writing for Rolling Stone in 2000 , Anthony DeCurtis praised the song for its musical demonstration of " the sweet satisfactions of faith " . On a triple album where " nearly every song is excellent " , AllMusic picks " All Things Must Pass " as one of five standout tracks (or AMG track picks) , with

Richie Unterberger writing of its autumnal theme : " It 's the kind of song that fits the mood in November , when the trees are getting stripped bare of their leaves , the days are getting shorter and colder , and you have to resign yourself to knowing it 's going to be tougher and tougher in those regards for months , also knowing that those hardships will pass away come springtime . " In his book on Harrison , subtitled A Spiritual Biography , Gary Tillery refers to the song as " magisterial " and a " majestic title track " that " leaves even the shallowest listener contemplative " . Michael Gallucci of Ultimate Classic Rock places " All Things Must Pass " third on his list of Harrison 's best solo songs (behind the two hit singles from All Things Must Pass , " My Sweet Lord " and " What Is Life ") , and comments : " The album 's title track takes on more poignancy after Harrison 's death [in 2001] , but it 's always been great . " Writing for Rough Guides , Chris Ingham similarly describes the song as " a heart @-@ rending piece of significant prescience which seems to take on more poignancy with every passing year " .

Among Harrison 's biographers , Simon Leng considers " All Things Must Pass " a " classic of Harrison 's lyrical ambiguity , in essence a hopeful song , without sounding so " , with a lyric that " approaches Bob Dylan standard " . Ian Inglis also praises the lyrics , writing : " The song contains some of Harrison 's most insightful and pensive words . ' Daylight is good at arriving at the right time ' is a fine example of his ... ability to position the profound within the commonplace . " Elliot Huntley rates it as one of Harrison 's " most beautiful " songs , " if not the very best " , and suggests that the sentiments behind " All Things Must Pass " would have made it a " fitting conclusion " to the final album recorded by the Beatles , Abbey Road (1969) .

Bruce Spizer similarly rates " All Things Must Pass " a highlight of Harrison 's career , while Leng considers it " perhaps the greatest solo Beatle composition " of all . In his book Revolution in the Head , Ian MacDonald describes " All Things Must Pass " as " the wisest song never recorded by The Beatles " . In 2009 , The Guardian included the track in its list of " 1000 Songs Everyone Must Hear " .

= = Performance and later releases = =

" All Things Must Pass " was not a track that Harrison ever played in concert , although it appeared on his preliminary setlist for the 1971 Concert for Bangladesh shows . He twice performed the song live in front of TV cameras during the final years of his life , beginning with his appearance with Ravi Shankar on VH1 's Hard Rock Live , filmed in New York on 14 May 1997 . The pair were on the show to promote their recent collaboration , Chants of India , but at host John Fugelsang 's urging , Harrison accepted an acoustic guitar and performed a brief rendition of " All Things Must Pass " . In late 2000 , Harrison sang " All Things Must Pass " while again seated on a stool on Friar Park 's main lawn , a performance that was included in the press kit for All Things Must Pass 's 30th anniversary reissue early the following year .

Coinciding with this 2001 reissue , the song appeared on a promotional single as the B @-@ side to " My Sweet Lord (2000) " . After being omitted from the " cursory " selection of 1970 ? 75 tracks on The Best of George Harrison (1976) , Inglis writes , the song appeared on Harrison 's 2009 career @-@ spanning compilation Let It Roll .

In Martin Scorsese 's 2011 documentary George Harrison : Living in the Material World , " All Things Must Pass " is the first song featured in the movie , played over footage of German air raids over Britain during World War II . In November that year , a 1970 @-@ recorded demo of the song (featuring just Harrison , Starr and Voormann) appeared on the deluxe edition CD accompanying the British DVD release of the film ; this CD was subsequently issued worldwide in May 2012 as Early Takes : Volume 1 .

= = Cover versions = =

Steve Wood and Daniel May composed music to the 1998 documentary film Everest incorporating melodies from some of George Harrison 's songs , one of which was " All Things Must Pass " . At the Concert for George tribute to Harrison , held at London 's Royal Albert Hall on 29 November

2002 , Paul McCartney sang " All Things Must Pass " , backed by a large band that included Preston , Clapton , Voormann and Starr . Leng notes the irony in McCartney performing the song , while Beatles biographer Peter Doggett comments : " it wasn 't hard to imagine Harrison 's cynicism as McCartney led the band into a soulful rendition of ' All Things Must Pass ' ? one of the songs that the other Beatles had refused to take seriously in January 1969 . " According to Clapton , author Robert Rodriguez writes , McCartney " was humbled at having to relearn it " .

Several other artists have recorded " All Things Must Pass " in the years since Harrison 's death . In 2003 , Bobby Whitlock and his wife , CoCo Carmel , included the song on their acoustic live album Other Assorted Love Songs , Live from Whitney Chapel . Jazz guitarist Joel Harrison covered " All Things Must Pass " on his album Harrison on Harrison : Jazz Explanations of George Harrison , released in October 2005 . In 2007 , a live version by the Waterboys appeared on their CD single " Everybody Takes a Tumble " , and the following year Sloan Wainwright included a cover of the song on her album Rediscovery .

" All Things Must Pass " was among the Harrison compositions covered by Jim James on his Tribute To EP , recorded in December 2001 but not released until August 2009 . Also in 2009 , Klaus Voormann released a version of the song on his solo album A Sideman 's Journey , with Yusuf Islam on vocals and acoustic guitar .

= = Personnel = =

The musicians who performed on Harrison 's All Things Must Pass version of the song are believed to be as follows :

George Harrison ? vocals , acoustic guitar , backing vocals

Eric Clapton ? acoustic guitar , backing vocals

Pete Drake ? pedal steel

Billy Preston ? piano

Bobby Whitlock ? harmonium , backing vocals

Klaus Voormann ? bass

Ringo Starr ? drums , tambourine

Jim Gordon ? drums

Bobby Keys ? saxophone

Jim Price ? trumpet , trombone , horn arrangement

John Barham ? string arrangement